Rents, Patronage, and Defection: State-building and Insurgency in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

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Afghanistan has been one of the most protracted conflicts modern era, but theories of civil war onset fail to explain the war's causes or its patterns of violence. This thesis examines the origins of the post-2001 period of the conflict through the perspective of state formation; although many civil wars today unfold in newly-forming states, the processes of center-periphery relations and elite incorporation have been little studied in the context of political violence. The thesis first describes how Afghanistan's embeddedness in the international state system and global markets undermined the nascent state's efforts to centralize and bureaucratize, leading instead to warlordism and neopatrimonialism. Second, it demonstrates that the development of an insurgency after 2001 was due not to ethnic grievance or rebel opportunities for profit, but rather to the degree to which local elites were excluded from state patronage. Third, it examines the role of ideology and social position in the Afghan Taliban movement. The dissertation seeks to offer a theory of political violence in Afghanistan that can, *mutatis mutandis*, help explain key features of civil war in newly-forming states.

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Introduction

Insurgency and civil war have been persistent features of the developing world. Internal war is now the most common form of armed conflict, far surpassing intra-state violence. Today, amid a fresh wave of wars and revolutions across the Middle East, it remains a subject of immense practical and theoretical importance. Fearon and Laitin (2003) estimate that between 1945 and 1999, nearly five times as many people were killed in internal wars than in interstate wars. In that period, 25 states engaged in interstate conflict, whereas 73 nations—a third of the globe—have suffered from civil war. The appearance of new civil wars during this time was roughly constant, while the steady accumulation of unresolved conflicts means that the percentage of countries with at least one civil war has more than doubled since 1945. These conflicts are growing evermore protracted: while the average civil war duration in 1945 was two years, by 1999 it was about 15 years (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

Despite this, modern civil war has received limited attention in the sociological literature. As Wimmer (2014) points out, sociologists have often focused on the consequences of modern war, rather than the causes. Until recently, explorations of the casual mechanisms behind civil war have instead been the domain of political science and economics. The dominant paradigm in these fields is the greed-grievance dichotomy, which explains civil war onset either by political motive (a reaction to political oppression, ethnic exclusion, or other grievances) or economic opportunity (such as that associated with looting natural resources) (Berdal and Malone, 2000). Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) influential study, for example, use a data set consisting of 78 civil wars from 161 countries to argue that individuals rebel when it is profitable for them to do so. On the other hand, Cedermann et al. (2011) use data from 155 countries and 733 ethnic groups to argue that grievances stemming from economic and political inequality propel internecine conflict.

Despite their popularity, these generalized models often fail to explain specific conflicts or predict violence (Collier and Sambanis 2005; Ballentine and Sherman 2003). One reason is the dearth of adequate proxy variables for many measures of grievance and opportunity necessary to construct large-*N* studies. Another

is the mismatch between national-level data and civil war processes that are, by definition, sub-national; as Kalyvas (2006) has demonstrated, civil wars are local, granular phenomena that unfold in an intimate and often rural world far from the macro-view.

Alongside these methodological concerns is a theoretical one: by and large, the literature has ignored the role of the state. Many studies implicitly treat civil war as a "rebel-centric" phenomenon (Ballantine & Nitzschke, 2005), viewing the state as a backdrop or passive actor, with little role in instigating or perpetuating conflict. This is despite the fact that many civil wars since 1945 have occurred in countries undergoing a protracted process of state formation. The development of state institutions, state centralization, and center-periphery relations have not received sufficient attention.

Of course, the link between state formation and war is well known in sociology, but that literature is limited to early modern Europe (Tilly, 1975; Fischer & Lundgreen, 1975). The role of state formation—and in particular, the effects of elite incorporation, strategies of state building, and the development of state capacity under conditions of war—has been little studied in the modern context. The aim of this thesis is to "bring the state back in" to the study of civil war, and by doing so, to recruit traditional sociological concerns of power, legitimacy, and the organizational capacity of the state for the analysis of modern conflict. It also aims to address the methodological concerns above by grounding the analysis in a granular national and sub-national case study, the war in Afghanistan. By doing so, it builds on recent works on non-Western state formation, such as Jeffrey Herbst's study of Africa (2000) and Miguel Centeno's research on Latin America (2002), and the work of scholars engaged in sub-national and small-*N* studies of political violence (e.g., Wood 2003; Restrepo et al. 2004; Viterna 2006; Kalyvas 2006, 2007). It will focus on the development of rebellion and civil war in Afghanistan after 2001, and seeks to offer a theory of political violence in Afghanistan that can, *mutatis mutandis*, help explain key features of civil war in newly-forming states.

First, it will describe how Afghanistan's embeddedness in the international state system and global markets undermined the nascent state's efforts to centralize and bureaucratize, leading instead to warlordism and neopatrimonialism. In the classical model of early modern Europe, taxation to support warfare helped build state capacity by spurring bureaucratization and the development of state institutions (Tilly, 1992). The availability of rents in the form of international aid caused Afghanistan to circumvent this process; local sub-national actors in alliance with foreign militaries "spatially fixed" rent flows by tying rents to specific regions in the country, producing warlordism, prompting patrimonial networks to invade formal institutions, and deeply corrupting the state. In effect, this process condemned the post-2001 Afghan state to revert to a style of "third-world politics" (Clapham, 1985) that laid the seeds for state failure and rebellion.

Second, it demonstrates that the development of an insurgency after 2001 was due not to ethnic grievance or rebel opportunities for profit, but rather to the degree to which local elites were excluded from state patronage. The U.S. military presence incentivized the nascent Afghan state to incorporate some local elites and exclude others; the dissertation uses detailed data of elite networks to predict the patterns of differential incorporation and insurgency.

The emphasis on rents producing warlordism suggests evidence for the economic opportunity thesis in the greed-grievance debate (albeit "greed" on the part of state actors, as opposed to rebels). Yet the emphasis on the political exclusion resulting from differential incorporation of patronage suggests evidence in favor of the grievance side of the dichotomy. In fact, the Afghanistan case shows that both elements operate simultaneously, even in the same group or individual—meaning they are not necessarily analytically separate categories. It was both the economic opportunities provided by post-2001 foreign intervention, and the grievances that it generated, that help explain the onset of conflict in Afghanistan.

The third section of this thesis illustrates the necessity of moving beyond greed and grievance models by

examining the actions of the leadership of the Taliban insurgency. By using a rich archive of Taliban data, it demonstrates that an individual's structural position within the informal co-affiliation network of Taliban leadership is a far better predictor of the decision to fight than either formal position in the 1990s Taliban state or classical identity-based attributes like ethnicity or tribe. This finding sheds light on the role of ideology in civil war, something overemphasized in media accounts of violence and hardly mentioned in the literature.

In what follows, I will first describe the case of Afghanistan and why it is a well-suited subject for the study of civil war. Then I overview the relevant literature in sociology and political science on modern civil war and detail shortcomings that this dissertation might help address. Finally, I present an outline of this thesis.

Models of Civil War

The civil war in Afghanistan began in April 1978, when the PDPA, the Afghan Communist Party, seized power in a coup. Almost immediately, there was armed resistance to the new regime, spearheaded by rebels fighting in the name of Islam, called the *mujahedeen*. The PDPA itself was riven in two factions, and the spiraling violence between them and the growing countryside rebellion sparked the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1979. By the time the Soviets withdrew in 1989, millions of Afghans were dead or living in refugee camps. After the Soviet departure, Moscow continued to prop up an Afghan state that was battling CIA-backed mujahedeen rebels. The state finally collapsed in 1992, leading to even more bloodshed as the mujahedeen groups turned their guns on each other. In 1994, a fundamentalist student movement known as the Taliban emerged to sweep aside the various mujahedeen factions and embark on a state building project. Following the September 11 attacks, the United States invaded to overthrow this state, effectively ending the two-decade civil war. For three years, the country was at peace as Afghan elites and their foreign backers embarked upon a new state building project. By 2005, though, the Taliban had regrouped as an insurgency, unleashing a new civil war that continues to this day.

At first blush, it may seem that the circumstances of the post-2001 conflict—the 9-11 attacks and the foreign invasion—render Afghanistan unique among civil wars. In fact, the key elements of the conflict are quite common to other wars. Numerous conflicts have sprung from foreign occupation, such as in Greece, Somalia, and Iraq, along with post-colonial cases like Algeria and Vietnam. Moreover, all civil wars are heavily influenced by external actors (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Natural resources such as diamonds and oil play an important role in many civil wars (Ross, 2004). Although Afghanistan has no exploitable natural resources, it contains a *political* resource—the ability to act as a buffer against terrorism—that the Afghan state "sells" in the international marketplace in return for foreign aid. And Afghanistan's cycles of state collapse, and its waves of civil war, are common among weak conflict prone states; between 1945-1996, nearly 40% of civil wars were followed by an additional war (Walter, 2004).

If Afghanistan is a typical case of modern civil war, it is poorly explained by prevailing theories of conflict. Recent work has harnessed the power of large data sets that span the *longue durée* of internal strife. The exemplary work in this tradition is Collier and Hoeffler (2004), who use data from 78 civil wars in 161 countries to argue for economic opportunity as the preponderant factor in explaining conflict outbreak. They model rebellion as an "industry" that generates profits, so that "insurgents are indistinguishable from bandits or pirates" (Grossman, 1999). The underlying assumption is that individuals will rebel when there is sufficient opportunity to profit from doing so, which focuses the analytical gaze on the structure of economic opportunities in a country and the shifts in this structure that produce rebellion. Such opportunities include foregone earnings (when potential income earned through rebel activities is greater than that earned through licit work), the presence of large diaspora communities and allied foreign governments to financially support the insurgency, and the presence of a dispersed population (which affords rebels a military advantage).

Though popular, authors have recently highlighted a number of shortcomings in Collier-Hoeffler approach (e.g., Berdal 2005). First, it relies on proxy variables of doubtful efficacy. To proxy opportunities arising from low entry cost of rebellion, for example, the model uses GDP growth rates and secondary school enrollment data, both of which are riddled with cofounding interpretations. The proxy for diaspora size of a given country is the size of that country's immigrant population in the United States, which raises obvious selection concerns. Second, some variables like GDP growth rate may in fact be proxies for grievances, not economic opportunity. Third, the model treats categories of identity such as ethnicity as fixed and *a priori*, when in fact they could be outcomes of the conflict itself. This speaks to a broader concern about the endogeneities across many of the variables.

When applied to Afghanistan, the Collier-Hoeffler model has mixed results. It predicts that growth of GDP per capita is negatively associated with civil war risk, but the onset of Afghanistan's two civil wars (1978 and 2004) followed periods of positive GDP growth (Figure 1). Similarly, in the model population size is negatively correlated with civil war risk, but the 2004 civil war occurred after a massive population boom resulting from returning refugees.

A second major approach is Fearon and Laitin's (2003) opportunity model of civil war. If the Collier-Hoeffler model is an instrumentalist, utility-maximizing account of civil war, the Fearon-Laitin model is a Hobbesian variant: groups rebel when the state is too weak to prevent them. Like Collier-Hoeffler, this approach minimizes the role of grievance, instead focusing on factors that allow rebel movements to organize and sustain themselves. These include mountainous or inhospitable terrain, poorly serviced by roads and lying far from the center; political instability at the center; a large population, which increases both the surveillance burden on the state and the pool of potential recruits for insurgents; and poverty, which reflects the weakness of the state's administrative and coercive capabilities.

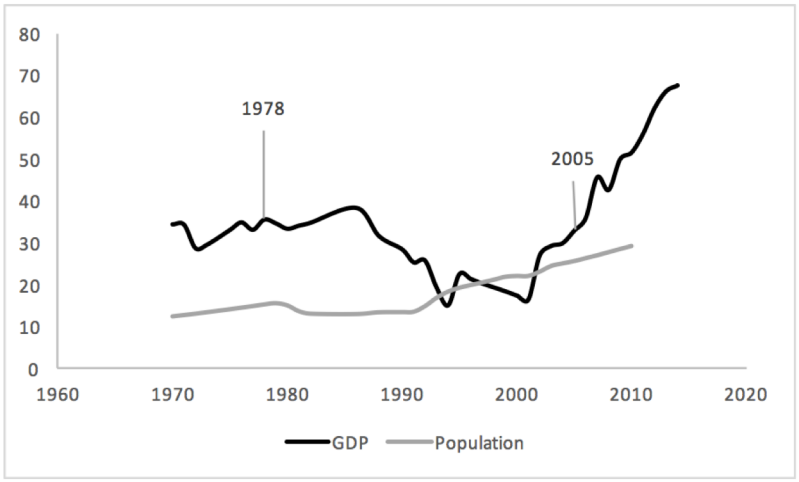

Figure 1 Afghanistan GDP and Population

Note: GDP in 10 million Afghanis, 2005 values. Population in millions. Sources: United Nations National Accounts Estimates; Federal Reserve Economic Data.

This model also suffers from methodological weaknesses, including the same proxy variable problems that plagued the Collier-Hoeffler approach. State capacity lies at the core of the model, but the concept is difficult to proxy using cross-national data (Hendrix, 2010). For example, the model uses per capita income as a proxy for state capacity, although it is conceivable that a state's coercive capability might be high while general income levels are low.

When applied to Afghanistan, the model has mixed results. Certainly, low per-capita income and political instability have characterized Afghanistan since 1978. But the central highland region, the most rugged and impoverished part of the country, has been pro-government and stable since 2001. As Chapter 2 will show, on a sub-national level indicators of poverty also fail to predict violence; areas with greater government spending and a more robust state apparatus are also those where insurgency appeared first. It may indeed be the case that rebel movements are more likely to organize and sustain themselves when the state lacks the capacity to repress them, but the model is unable to determine whether this is because these conditions allow groups to successfully respond to grievances or because there is simply no Leviathan to keep groups from scrambling for power.

A third major research tradition, most closely associated with the work of Frances Stewart, emphasizes the role of grievances in civil conflict (Stewart, 2008). An important variant of this approach is the work of Wimmer and colleagues (Wimmer, 2002; Wimmer and Min, 2006). They identify civil war with shifts in forms of state legitimacy, such as that accompanying the transition from feudal or indirect rule to the nation state. These shifts can produce new social categories that can, under the right conditions, become politicized and lay the seeds for violence. Rebellion is more probable when the "like over like" principle—that rulers and ruled should be of the same ethnolinguistic stock—is violated. This approach has the virtue of focusing on the link between nation-state formation and violence, and unlike other approaches it explicitly models for time. But the core identification of civil war with ethnicity does not apply in Afghanistan. Most (but not all) Afghan rebels belong to the majority Pashtun ethnic group, which also dominates the ranks of the Afghan state. At the local level, most violence occurs in Pashtun areas, where the Pashtun-dominated Taliban fight the Pashtun-dominated local government and armed forces.

State Formation: Classic and Modern

Charles Tilly and colleagues (Tilly and Ardant, 1975; Tilly, Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, 1985) developed the classic theory of European state formation, summarized in Tilly's famous aphorism, "War made the state and the state made war." In the theory's most basic formulation, European monarchs waging war against each other faced the incessant need to raise revenue and soldiers, which they did by extracting these resources from the population in the form of taxes and conscripts. Extraction required organization, particularly in the form of tax collectors and surveyors to count the population, produce cadastral surveys, and forcibly dispossess locals of their grain and gold (Scott, 1998). The exigencies of extracting taxes from an unwilling population spurred the expansion and differentiation of official institutions (Ardant, 1975). As the state expanded, it further differentiated to co-opt local roles and create a variety of new ones based on the technical requirements of extraction and centralized rule: judges, police, accountants, propagandists, and so on (Fischer and Lundgreen, 1975). Over the generations, the state institutions containing these roles

developed on legal-rational lines, because those states that did so garnered an organizational advantage over their rivals, because of the development of capitalism, and because of a complex interplay between local populations and central authorities.

This last point suggests the fulcrum of the development of the European state. Everywhere, local populations resisted rulers' efforts to extract. This often occurred through attacks on tax collectors, and sometimes, outright revolt against the state: In England, the 1489 Yorkshire rebellion and the 1497 Cornish rebellion were popular uprisings against taxes levied in support of Henry VII's various military campaigns. Ostensibly religious uprisings, like the Pilgrimage of Grace (1536-1537) and the Prayerbook Rebellion (1547-1549) were in part reactions to state centralization and taxation (Fletcher and MacCulloch, 2015). In France, the Croquant uprisings of 1594-1637 were in response to onerous taxes resulting from religious wars, the Saintogne uprisings a reaction to an excise tax, and in 1643 a 1200-man insurgent army formed in Rouergue in response to various royal taxes. In Spain, the Revolt of the Comuneros (1520-1521) and the Aragon Rebellion were both related, in part, to a heavy tax burden. The Catalan Revolt (1604-1659) and the War of the Vendée in France (1793-1796) were partially a response to conscription. Numerous other uprisings were in one way or another reactions to the centralizing efforts of the crown. The various rebellions, and state reactions to them, culminated in the two great civil wars of the era, the English Civil War (1640-1660) and the Fronde (1648-1653).

In some cases, the revolts were crushed, in others the rebels managed to win concessions—but in all cases the uprisings left the state and its organizations changed. Over centuries, repeated public mobilizations—increasingly on a national scale—made claims on the very state institutions impinging upon them. Effectively, this led to the transfer of a variety of customary rights to state institutions. Tilly writes, "The European national revolutions of the last few centuries did not so much expand political rights as concentrate them in the state and reduce their investment in other sorts of governments. A large part of the process consisted of the state's abridging, destroying or absorbing rights previously lodged in other political

units: manors, communities, provinces, estates." (Tilly, 1975). In addition to transfer, this process also helped propel the systematization of those rights along rational-legal forms. Ultimately, both the organizational needs of rulers and popular resistance to those organizations promoted the rationalization of state institutions.

Alongside this "vertical" dialectic of resistance and co-optation was a "horizontal" one: centralization and taxation placed rulers in frequent conflict with lords and other regional elites. In some cases, these lords formed cross-class alliances with peasantry to resist the center, in which case the rulers sought a variety of inducements to split the coalition, including the sale of offices, tax farming, and the incorporation into state bodies. In other cases, rulers intervened in class conflict between lords and peasants, supporting one side or the other with the aim of centralization and extraction (Brustein, 1985). Either way, the long-term trend was for rulers to violently penetrate local communities while incorporating local elites into the state, and for popular mobilizations to make claims on state institutions as a way to protect and expand political rights.

State formation in the Global South

The non-Western path to state formation shows obvious differences to this classic account (Reno 1999; Herbst 2000; Centeno 2003). Europe had the luxury of centuries while the modern era of state formation in the Global South began only after World War II. The distribution of power between rulers and ruled is far more skewed today to the former because of advances in military and surveillance technology. Yet just as important are states' embeddedness in the international state system and international markets, which this thesis argues produces conditions that condemn many to remain weak states at perpetual risk for civil war. There is a rich literature examining the question of under-development of the third world, which include broad theoretical paradigms like Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory (Ferraro, 2008; Wallerstein, 2011). But these focus on the economics of non-Western societies, whereas I wish to describe

the way in which international political economy and norms of statehood affect the development of state centralization and state institutions, and how these phenomena affect the risk of civil war.

A core difference between 16th century Europe and modern state formation is that the fundamental relationship between rulers and ruled has been inverted. In the historical case, rulers relied on their populations for extraction, but in the modern case rulers have been relatively freed from this requirement through three means: 1) *International markets*: The exemplary case is rents accrued through the sale of natural resources, such as oil. Another important case is access to international credit. 2) *Political aid*: World powers extend loans or grants to developing countries as a way to buy political influence; to take one example, Kennedy's Food for Peace program resulted in the development of import-oriented economies in the Middle East around wheat and grain. By 1962, more than half of Egypt's wheat supply came from U.S. food aid (Hanieh, 2013). Though this distorted the local economy in important ways—between 1960 to 1980 Egypt's self-sufficiency ratio (domestic production vs. consumption) dropped from 70% to 23%—it also influenced the state's subsidy system, and by extension, the way in which state elites distributed resources. An important subset in this category is military aid, which allows weak states to maintain power under conditions that would have toppled weak early modern European states. 3) *International legitimacy*: Under conditions of great power alliances and the norms of the international state system, the Weberian definition of the state as an organization with the monopoly on legitimate violence within a territory no longer applies. Instead, many states in the Global South are states by virtue of their *de jure* status in the international state system, meaning that formal recognition—and not coercive monopoly—is the *sine qua non* of modern statehood (Jackson, 1993).

These differences adversely affect the state's extractive capacity. Moore (1998) shows that states heavily dependent on foreign aid will have weak extractive capacities, while Centeno describes how interstate war among Latin American rulers did not force them to extract because of the availability of financing through capital markets (Centeno, 2003). The net result is that whereas early European rulers relied on their

populations to meet their strategic and political needs, now, populations rely on their rulers; the modern state's primary role, from the perspective of local populations, is distributive. Far from resisting state encroachment and centralization, local elites seek to incorporate into the state, through titles, offices, contracts. Similarly so for local communities, which seek a redistribution of the state's economic and juridical power to their benefit. But state makers are not wholly reliant on local communities or local elites, so they weigh the prerogatives of incorporation against many other factors, including their position in the international system, their alliances with great powers, and their ties to foreign firms. If the logic of European state builders was to attempt the broad co-optation of local elites and populations—what might be called "centralizing incorporation"—so as to forestall rebellion and maximize extractive capacity, the logic of modern state builders is "differential incorporation:" a form of co-optation that proceeds in line with the structural incentives resulting from the state's embeddedness in international markets and the international state system. A logic such as this produces clear winners and losers, making inclusion-exclusion the core antimony of modern state building.

If political exclusion is a standard byproduct of modern state formation, though, its consequences depend on the developmental pathway of the state in question. Exclusion exists in all societies to various degrees, but only under certain circumstances do excluded elites or communities turn to armed defiance of the state. The first circumstance relates to the state's coercive ability: the less centralized the state, the less it is able to project repressive violence against the politically excluded, and the more likely is insurgency and civil war. A striking characteristic of nations in the Global South is the degree to which states lack this coercive monopoly and are instead forced to share it with a variety of non-state actors. The most obvious example is warlordism in countries like Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Somalia—all cases where, at various points, the central state shared its coercive power with local non-state actors. Warlords are independent entrepreneurs of violence who have developed regional fiefdoms, or have captured key parts of the state machinery, to put to private use. In these cases, the state strikes a series of informal deals with local power brokers, a process that Bayart terms "elite

accommodation." (Bayart, 1989). Another mechanism for the devolution of the state's coercive power is through the development of militias and praetorian guards that emerge from within the center as a rival form of authority. Examples include Shia militias in Iraq, the Revolutionary Guards in Iran, anti-communist paramilitary forces in Latin America, the National Defense Forces in Syria, and many others. A third mechanism is a post-civil war settlement in which the state allows groups to keep their weapons, as with Hizbollah in Lebanon or Albanian fighters in Kosovo. Overall, Carey and co-researchers estimate that pro-government armed groups from these three categories operate in at least 88 countries (Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe, 2013).

The second circumstance that affects whether political exclusion develops into violence is the quality of state institutions and their relationship to social life. In the ideal case, democratic institutions are indicative of "broad, equal, consultative, and protective" relations between the state and its citizens (Tilly, 2007); however, democracies—such as Afghanistan and Iraq—also suffer from civil war. More relevant is the extent to which state institutions are rationalized and impersonal versus patrimonial; rational-legal institutions may be more capable of repressing dissent, or "capturing" dissent and diverting it to non-violent avenues. Moreover, state rationalization is linked to the rationalization of social life in general; trade unions, mass political parties, and other impersonal, collective civic associations are (usually) channels of peaceful dissent.

Modern-day patrimonialism exists in the context of the international state system, in which states seek to copy the formal aspects of Western statehood in order to interface with foreign donors, firms, and governments. The result is "neopatrimonialism," (Eisenstadt, 1973), which Clapham describes as "a form of organization in which relations of a broadly patrimonial type pervade a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines" (Clapham, 1985). Many authors have described ways in which fully legal-rational regimes are better able to withstand violent opposition, or insurrectionary pressures, than neopatrimonial ones. Goodwin and Skocpol (2000) write that

> territorial control, the co-optation or accommodation of elites and the middle class, the removal of an unpopular leader, and the transition to a more open political regime… are more easily accomplished by bureaucratic (as opposed to neopatrimonial) authoritarian regimes. Indeed, bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes give power and prerogatives to collectives—such as cohorts of military officers—who can bargain with, or even displace, one another without unraveling the regime. But Sultanistic neopatrimonial regimes pit personal dictators against elites, and elites against one another, rendering political stability highly dependent on the unrelenting willingness and vigilance of the individual ruler.

In summary, modern state formation subverts the historical relationship between rulers and ruled. The classic dialectic of extraction, resistance and co-optation is no more; the logic of centralizing incorporation has been replaced by differential incorporation and political exclusion. The inequities of the international state system therefore produce state weakness, and two areas where weak state capacity bear directly on the prospect of civil war are state centralization of the means of violence and state institutions. Weak centers in alliance with warlords or regional strongman, together with neopatrimonial rule, create the conditions under which political exclusion can lead to violence.

Thesis outline

This thesis consists of three separate articles. My aim in bringing them together here is to be describe how these processes unfolded in Afghanistan by exploring 1) the mechanisms generating Afghan state weakness 2) the mechanisms generating political exclusion and 3) how these interact to produce civil war. Chapter 1 will describe how Afghanistan's embeddedness in international markets, and its relationship with foreign militaries, produced warlordism and neopatrimonialism. It begins by describing Afghanistan as a rentier state which "sold" its ability to act as a buffer against terrorism in the international political market in return for foreign aid. Sub-regional actors allied to the U.S. military used their local knowledge to capture this aid; this process of "spatial fixing" tied aid to specific regions of the country, allowing these local actors to build retinues and fiefdoms, thereby becoming warlords. The central state was then forced to accommodate these warlords, drawing them into the formal ranks of the state and embedding their patrimonial networks

within the rational-legal veneer of statehood necessary to interface with the international community. I develop this argument through five detailed case studies, based on extensive field interviews and archival documentation. I contrast this development with areas of the country that received little foreign aid, as well as to the previous Taliban regime. In this sense, Afghanistan provides a unique case with which to examine the international role in modern state building: while the post-2001 regime was a classic rentier state, the 1994-2001 Taliban regime was the opposite. It received little foreign aid and almost no international recognition. Under these conditions, it pursued a state-building program more similar to early modern Europe or the high Ottoman period than to that of the modern world.

Chapter 2 describes the process of political exclusion, which under the conditions of warlordism and neopatrimonialism described above produced the insurgency. It focuses on two districts in southern Afghanistan that are similar demographically, culturally, and historically but faced divergent outcomes after 2001: one became an insurgent stronghold, the other a bastion of state control. Building on work by Gould (1996) and Bearman (1993), I show that the difference is not due to military opportunity or ethno-tribal factors, but rather to the degree to which local elites were excluded from state patronage. The U.S. military presence incentivized the nascent Afghan state to incorporate some local elites and exclude others; I use detailed data of network elites and develop a novel analytical method to study these networks, through which I am able to predict the pattern of differential incorporation and insurgency.

Chapter 3 shifts the focus to the combatants themselves. At first glance, the Taliban's notoriously fundamentalist ideology appears to cast doubt on my claims that international networks and local social structure play a key role in explaining the conflict. As a movement, the Taliban may appear *sui generis*, or at least it may seem that hardline Islamists cannot be analyzed in the same manner as, say, Latin American guerrillas. I address this concern Chapter 3 by examining the structure of the leadership network of the Taliban. Using a rich archive of Taliban-produced writings and propaganda, I construct a network of co-affiliations of the Taliban elite. After 2001, roughly one-third of the leadership switched sides to join the

Afghan government. By analyzing the network and various attributes, and developing novel analytical methods to study brokerage, I demonstrate that the best predictor of a whether an individual stayed in the movement or defected is his network position. I couple this finding with detailed interviews with defectors to argue that the key factor influencing a decision to defect was an individual's assessment of the risk in staying in the group—an assessment that was influenced by his sense of group solidarity. Crucially, an individual's ideology—and his identity—changed *after* his defection, not before. This suggests that, at least for the life-and-death case of violence and civil war, ideology is an interpretative act that serves to endow a person's political and factional choices with meaning, as opposed to a doctrine that determines those choices in the first place. If true, it is further evidence that group-level categories emerge through individual relational activity. They do not exist *a priori.* The ways these categories emerge—who is included, who gets left out, and how—is key to understanding modern civil war.

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1

Rentier State Formation: Warlordism and State Weakness in Afghanistan

ABSTRACT

State strength is often understood to be an outcome of the latent social structure of a country. According to this theory, states are unable to impose their will on society when the social organizations of the periphery are strong, especially for war-prone non-Western states facing corporate structures like tribe, clan, and ethnicity. This chapter argues instead that it is the nature of the state's relationship with the international state system that helps determine the relative balance of strength of the state and society. Using the case of Afghanistan, it shows that the recalcitrance of Afghan social structures in the face of state building was not due to indigenous culture or the nature of pre-existing social organizations. Instead, Afghanistan's status as a rentier state, and rent dispersion, the process by which rents bypassed the center and accrued to the periphery, helped produce state weakness. Rent dispersion promoted warlordism and forced the state into patterns of corruption and dependency, enabling the conditions under which insurgency could thrive.

Introduction

In the following decade, a historic international effort would seek to resuscitate the country by reviving the economy and building a strong central state. International donors contributed over $25 billion in non-military aid, while the U.S. alone earmarked $100 billion in congressional appropriations—more than Washington spent on the Marshall Plan (Poole, 2011). The international community expended billions on creating and training a national army and police, on training lawyers and judges for justice-sector reform, and on building schools. Nearly every major and minor state institution received aid and teams of advisers. Foreign experts played a central role in designing the 2004 constitution, making it one of the most progressive national charters in the world—it reserved 25% of parliamentary seats for women, better than most Western countries. The document also centralized state authority to an unprecedented degree: Kabul would have the power to appoint nearly all state officials, from provincial governors and line-ministry officials down to local administrators in the country's 400 districts. This accompanied a multi-million-dollar disarmament program, spearheaded by the United Nations, to demobilize and disband regional militias and transfer authority to the central state. Afghans embraced these efforts, and the idea of centralization was popular among the citizenry and officials in Kabul alike (Johnson, et al., 2003).

Yet by 2015, Afghanistan had become a failed state. In addition to a raging Taliban insurgency and a spiraling narcotics trade—Afghanistan was now the world's top opium exporter—the country was beset by ineffective formal institutions and a lack of centralized control. According to one prominent survey, it is the third most corrupt country on earth (Corruptions Perceptions Index, 2015). The central government has little direct authority outside major cities, prompting critics to deride former President Hamid Karzai as the "mayor of Kabul." Warlords rule the countryside, some holding official positions and others operating informally, and they have effectively divided the territory into personal fiefs. Hundreds of militias are nominally aligned to the central state but in fact operate autonomously.

In light of these dramatic failures, scholars have highlighted the enduring role of Afghan social structure. Thier (2006), for example, attributes failures of centralization in part to a "strong local social organization and well-developed tradition of independence." Barfield and Nojumi (2010) write that "American policy in Afghanistan fails to draw on the cultural and historical lessons of local governance in the country. It has wrongly assumed that building up a strong centralized government with formal institutions is the key to stability there." In this reading, Afghans are preternaturally opposed to centralization, and state centralizers face an obdurate local social structure—kinship networks, tribes, and ethnicities—that resist state penetration. Similarly, corruption is due to the country's long-standing patrimonial structures, which had resisted the international community's attempts to instill rule of law.

This explanation is an implicit attempt to answer a key concern of the sociology and political science of development: Why are some states strong and others weak? Specifically, why do a band of newly-forming states in the Global South—in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia—remain perpetually weak, corrupt, and violence-prone? Most recent work in sociology has employed a state-society dichotomy, arguing that these non-Western states are weak because their societies are strong (Callaghy, 1984; Marzui, 1986; Migdal, 1988; Smith, 1986); "society" here refers to the assemblage of social organizations which, to use Migdal's (1988) conceptualization, compete with the state to set the rules by which people live. These organizations include tribes, ethnic groups, village councils, traditional authorities, and so on. While these accounts are rich and varied, they share with Afghanistan-focused accounts an emphasis on local social structure; geopolitics, the global economy, and the prerogatives of key actors in the international state system play a lesser role.

Research excavating the distant histories of earlier regimes and formations prior to the nation state suffers from the paucity of fine-tuned data on state-society relations. In today's weak states, non-state social organizations appear to overwhelm the state, making it difficult to imagine a moment when the balance was not so unfavorable to state makers. As a case of modern-day state formation, however, Afghanistan provides

a unique opportunity to test theories of the state. This chapter argues that the recalcitrance of Afghan social structures in the face of state centralization was not pre-ordained, nor was it due to indigenous culture or to the nature of pre-existing social organizations. Instead, state weakness emerged as a consequence of the prerogatives of the international community— the same community whose expressed goal was state centralization. I demonstrate this through a series of detailed subnational case studies, based on extensive field research, which presents a causal explanation for the emergence of state weakness and corruption. These findings offer a new conceptual approach for the study of newly-forming states in the Global South: state weakness is an adaptation of state builders to international markets and the politics of the international state system. This builds on findings of scholars focusing on the effect of colonialism, such as Migdal (1988) and Anderson (2014), by drawing attention to the way in which similar processes continually reproduce state weakness today. And while some authors have commented on the correlation between ineffective formal institutions, underdevelopment, and corruption (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson, 2005), the causal processes that lead to ineffective formal institutions in the first place have been little studied and poorly understood. By describing the Afghan case, this chapter offers a theory for the development of state institutions and rationalization under conditions of the modern state system and the international market.

State capacity

Various theories of state capacity (Barkey and Parikh, 1991; Mann, 2012; Migdal, 1988) differ on emphases, but they agree on the core metric of state strength: the ability of rulers to use either force or mechanisms of consent to direct the social behavior of their subjects. Hendrix (2010) identifies three constructs through which this notion is operationalized in the literature: military power, bureaucratic and administrative capacity, and the quality of political institutions. The first refers to the classic Weberian conception of the state as the organization monopolizing the legitimate use of violence. A character of many weak non-Western states is that this type of centralization does not exist; these states persist through a combination of *de jure* recognition from the international system and *de facto* arrangements with local

power brokers—typically, warlords and strongmen—to secure rule in the periphery (Jackson, 1993; Reno, 1999). While such warlords may act as state builders (Mukhopadhyay, 2014), they may also act at cross-purposes with centralization, producing patterns of state weakness.

The second construct, bureaucratic and administrative capacity, refers to the ability of the state to deploy legal-rational institutions to control social life. Most weak non-Western states rule through "neopatrimonialism," whereby patrimonial relations are circumscribed in legal-rational institutions (Eisenstadt, 1973; Erdmann and Engel, 2007). At an extreme, this form of rule generates the type of grievances (through corruption) that, when coupled with the lack of centralization, may threaten the stability of weak states. The third construct, the quality of political institutions, refers to forms of governance, such as democracy or dictatorship. Although this has received much attention in the literature, there does not appear to be a strong link between the nature of a political regime and state strength. Some weak states are democracies and others are dictatorships.[1] For example, even as Afghanistan descended into warlordism and insurgency after 2001, it remained a democracy, with regular elections for president and parliament.

Since the form of governance is a poor indicator of state strength, this article will focus on state centralization and the rationalization of state institutions—what Charles Tilly calls the "stateness" of a regime—and examine how these phenomena unfolded within the international context (Tilly, 1975)[2]

[1] The intermediate type, which some authors call "anocracy," is usually defined as a mix of features of both and displays political instability. An attempt to link this to state weakness would be a circular argument, since it incorporates weakness into its definition.

[2] Tilly writes, "I mean the degree to which the instruments of government are differentiated from other organizations, centralized, autonomous, and formally coordinated with each other. Third, the forms of political rights exercised by the population with respect to the governmental structure. I have in mind the enforceable claims that members of the population can make on agents of the government—both compelling them to do something and preventing them from doing something else." This emphasizes the legal-rational domain, but implicitly takes centralization as a necessary condition. Note that this definition differs from Linz and Stepan (1996).

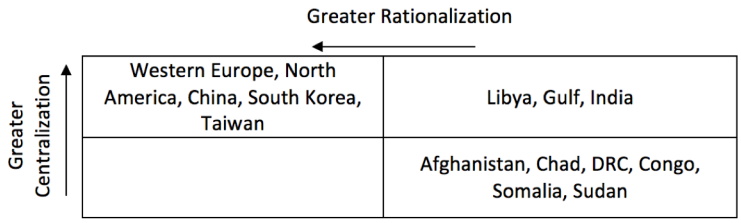

Figure 2 Rationalization and Centralization

Two forms of rent capture

Using rationalization and centralization as axes of analysis, we can group modern states into categories like those shown in Figure 1. A key factor distinguishing states in the right- hand column with those in the left is that the former states do not rely, or rely on a much lesser extent, on extraction of resources from their populations for survival. In the classic pathway of early modern Europe, rulers fought wars against each other, which required the extraction of taxes and conscripts from the population, which then spurred the state's organizational development, its differentiation, and its centralization. Communities facing the repressive extractive apparatus of the state resisted, made claims on the state, and through cycles of co-optation and resistance the modern European state was born (Tilly, 1992). A striking difference between the constellation of weak states on the right-hand side and those in early modern Europe is that many non-Western state builders have accrued funds without extraction, through access to foreign credit and exogenous capital in the form of rents. As I argue here, it was the way in which these rulers captured rents—that is, the relationship between state managers, local elite, and exogenous capital—that helped structure the non-Western state's power and its institutions.

There are two ways in which rent capture takes place, and they are linked to the spatial distribution and ownership structure of the resources producing rent. In one category are those resources that are usually spatially non-specific, such as foreign aid; for example, aid to Colombia or Egypt accrues directly to state, or to important state institutions like the military, making it difficult or impossible for subnational actors to

monopolize rents. The second category concerns spatializable rents: resources are spatially distributed, opening the possibility of subnational capture and potentially weakening the center with respect to the periphery. The type of state that ensues then depends on whether state builders or subnational elites succeed in monopolizing the resource; at one extreme, the state builders triumph, either because the state enjoyed a first-mover advantage or it was able, through external factors, to overwhelm rivals. In Gaddafi's Libya, to take one example, the revolutionary elite succeeded in monopolizing oil rents in large part because they seized the colonial administration, which had already monopolized oil rents (Vandewalle, 1998). Following the 2011 revolution and state collapse, however, local groups took control of oil refineries, blocking the internationally-recognized government from capturing rents, and Libya has been a weak to non-existent state ever since. When states such as Qaddafi's Libya or present-day Kuwait monopolize exogenous rent flows, the principle economic interaction between rulers and ruled is not extractive but allocative (Beblawi and Luciani, 1987). To use Mann's (2012) typology, these states rely on despotic power, not infrastructural power, to rule their societies.

On the other hand, when subnational actors succeed in capturing exogenous rent flows, state managers are forced to accommodate, resulting in a fragile center in alliance or collusion with independent powerbrokers and warlords. Such states, which account for the bottom right-hand corner of Figure 1, have neither despotic nor infrastructural power over their populations. In these states, rents do not accrue only to the center but instead simultaneously to the center and the periphery, or in some cases, predominately to the periphery. Rather than a byproduct of strong social organizations in the periphery, this process, which I will call "rent dispersion," in fact produces the peripheral strength that condemns these states to perpetual weakness.

The literature has not focused sufficient attention on the way rent flows configure modern-day state formation, a process which has allowed a number states to circumvent the European process of state formation. Rentier states are often discussed in conjunction with political dysfunction and economic underperformance (the "resource curse;" e.g. Ross, 1999), but that literature often takes state institutions as given or preexisting, instead of examining the role and distribution of rents in producing those very

institutions.

The mechanism of rent dispersion

For rent dispersion to take place, three processes must occur. First, the country must have resources exploitable on the international market that can fetch returns far enough above normal factor costs to make control of these resources a lucrative endeavor—even under the precarious conditions of illegality. Typically, such resources can include diamonds, iron ore, timber, opium, and political factors that induce aid. Second, rents must be spatially distributed, fixed to particular locales, which allows for subnational actors to compete with state elites for control. If resources are just institutionally distributed but spatially nonspecific—for instance, American aid to Israel—it is difficult for subnational actors to monopolize rents. Third, the resources must be, at least in the short term, renewable. Warlordism requires standing militias, control of roads, and manning of checkpoints, all of which require a durable structure, at least on the scale of months and years. As this study will show, the prospect of continued rents can be a powerful motivating force in subnational actors' decision to live in the precarious edge of state-periphery relations, even when political pressure to enter the fold and give up warlordism is high.

A roadmap

This article aims to describe how sub-national actors in Afghanistan captured international rents due to the country's role in the war on terror, and how this process impeded the state's ability to centralize and undermined the development of legal-rational institutions. In doing so, it shifts the emphasis away from explanations that see a seemingly powerful local social structure condemning Afghanistan to corruption and dysfunction to one that examines the ways in which international prerogatives surrounding the war on terror interacted with latent social structure to create powerful social organizations that competed with the central state. The findings are based on field research in Afghanistan, focused on Maiwand district and Kandahar City of Kandahar province, Deh Rawud district and Tirin Kot of Uruzgan province, and Lashkar

Gah and Gereshk of Helmand province. I conducted nearly one hundred semi-structured interviews in those areas with local tribal elders, government commanders, and Taliban members. I also made extensive use of a new archive of Taliban newspapers, magazines, and memoirs called the Taliban Sources Project, Afghan government fiscal records, and two caches of classified cables.

The opening section demonstrates how Afghanistan's unique importance to U.S. national security interests created a resource—the country's potential and ability to act as a buffer against terrorism—that state elites were able to monetize on the international market. The returns on this resource constituted rents, in the form of international aid, which came to dominate Afghan politics and the local economy. In the second section, I detail how subnational elites were able to outmaneuver the state in capturing these rents. They did so by taking advantage of local knowledge and the foreign forces' desire for actionable ground intelligence, which allowed them to spatially fix the resource, creating pockets of rent influx in geographically distinct parts of the country. It also describes how these subnational actors—by now, warlords—converted the ephemeral and contingent resource of counterterrorism into a renewable commodity, ensuring a short to medium-term durability of armed rivals to the center. The third section examines whether local social structure inhibited the state's ability to co-opt local elites or disarm warlords. By examining the history of a prominent militia, it demonstrates that it was access to foreign rents, not the durability of kinship or other corporate structures, that led to the state's failure to disarm and demobilize local groups. Section four examines how this process undermined the development of legal-rational institutions and abetted the rise of neopatrimonialism. The fifth section will examine the counterfactual case, state building in the absence of rents, by studying the Taliban state of the 1990s. It demonstrates that the during the 1994-2001 period the Taliban pursued coercion and co-optation strategies more similar to classic European state building than to the post-2001 experience. The conclusion offers some comparative thoughts and helps situate the Afghan case within the general experience of state formation under rent dispersion.

Afghanistan and Rents: Counterterrorism as a Resource

In the classic model of rentierism, a state controlling one or more resources that it sells on the world market accrues revenue independent of taxation or other economic activities of its citizens (Mahdavy, 1970). The principal economic interaction between ruler and subject is then the redistribution of rents in the form of social programs and patronage. Vandewalle (1998) therefore calls rentier states "distributive states," to contrast with so-called productive states, in which the economic interactions between ruler and subject include both the expropriation of wealth for taxes and (in the modern case) some redistribution of that wealth in the form of social programs. Usually, rentier states rely on natural resources, such as oil or natural gas, to accrue exogenous rents because the ratio of price to factor costs is abnormally high. For example, historically only 5-20% of the price of oil is due to the cost of production; the rest is economic rent arising from its nature as a finite resource (Beblawi and Luciani, 2015).

Recent work has shown that foreign aid can also function as economic rent (Djankov et al, 2008; Svensson, 2000; Rubin, 2002). Donors of foreign aid—particularly bilateral and multilateral aid—seek sociopolitical outcomes, and the contingent nature of these outcomes induces a sort of scarcity. This is why researchers have found that foreign aid generates rent-seeking behavior in grantees. There is evidence that foreign aid plays a major role in the public finances of developing countries, accounting for more than half of their total financial resources (Moore, 2004). Moore includes foreign aid as a special case of "strategic rents," which are surpluses that accrue to governments by virtue of their embeddedness in the international state system and their alliances with great powers. Strategic rents can arise from military aid, control over key transport arteries, and the leasing of military facilities (Moore, 2004).

In Afghanistan, strategic rents have played a major role since the early 1950s, with the exception of the 1992-1996 civil war (a period of total state collapse) and the 1996-2001 Taliban regime (which received minimal aid from Pakistan and Arab donors). In the period after 2001, however, the availability of

exogenous rents surpasses the rest of Afghan history by many orders of magnitude. Figure 2 shows rent income accruing to the state in a logarithmic scale to capture post-2001 rents together with prior rentier regimes. Historically, Afghan state officials managed what Rubin (2002) calls a "weak rentier state," in which domestically-generated revenues (through direct taxes on income and livestock, indirect taxes on foreign trade, and profits from state-run industry) were roughly equal to revenues sourced from exogenous rent (Figure 3). After 2001, however, Afghanistan developed into one of the most rent-reliant regimes in the world. Figure 4 shows that in some years foreign aid accounted for an astonishing 60% of the country's GDP.

How did the new Afghan elites of the post-2001 state manage to attract such a massive rent influx? When the United States invaded and toppled the Taliban-run state in 2001, there were few known natural resources and almost no infrastructure in the war-torn country. In subsequent years, however, Afghan state builders and local elites managed to "discover" a lucrative resource—the potential to act as a buffer against terrorism—which they were able to exploit on the international market. They monetized this buffer potential by organizing state and local intuitions around servicing American counterterrorism needs.

Because this resource required *production*, it was not a given that the post-2001 regime would become a rentier state. International donors did not support Afghanistan simply because it was a new state, but rather because of its perceived strategic role in protecting the interests of world powers. The U.S. invasion succeeded in a near-total dismantling of the *ancien régime*; al Qaeda fled the country, while the Taliban either decamped to Pakistan or surrendered (Gopal, 2014; Martin 2014). By early 2002, there was no anti-state or anti-American resistance, and Afghanistan was at peace for the first time in twenty-two years. The country was no longer a site of political violence directed against American interests. The international aid response reflected this situation; in fiscal year 2002, the U.S. provided only $649 million in non-military aid—roughly the cost of a single B-2 stealth bomber, barely enough to keep the fledgling state afloat. Overall, international aid disbursement in Afghanistan during 2002-4 was $63 per capita, far behind similar

post-conflict societies like Bosnia ($326), Kosovo ($288), East Timor ($195) and Rwanda ($193) (Fiscal Year 1382, 2003). During this period, Afghanistan was not among the top ten recipients of gross U.S. foreign aid expenditure, despite high-profile donor conferences and Western officials' public pledges of reconstruction aid.

After 2004, armed opposition to the new Afghan state and its American backers began to grow, and the price Afghan elites could fetch for counterterrorism soared. Table 1 reports a strong link between foreign aid spending in a given year and instability or insurgent violence the year prior. As real or perceived insurgents gained a foothold, the U.S. and its allies increased aid, which produced a ratcheting effect that brought more insurgents onto the battlefield (for reasons described below), which further drove up the price of Afghanistan's strategic alliance with the U.S. Afghanistan had played a similar role after World War II, when it collected rents from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union due to its position as a buffer state in the Cold War. Increased aid from one side would spark further aid from the other; the mechanism of Afghanistan's buffer potential was similar post-2001, the only difference being the massive scale of counterterrorism aid.

Rent Dispersion, Spatial Fixing, and Renewal

Since it could survive on rents, the new Afghan state created little organization outside the capital or major cities. Between 2002 and 2013, less than 30% of the state's domestic revenue came from direct taxation, and taxes accounted for only 5% of all government spending (Figure 4). Domestic revenue contributed to only 20% of all government expenditure; the state financed the remainder through rents. While this means that rents were responsible for keeping the state afloat, it only tells part of the story: the majority of exogenous rents bypassed the state and accrued in the hands of non-state elites and social organizations in

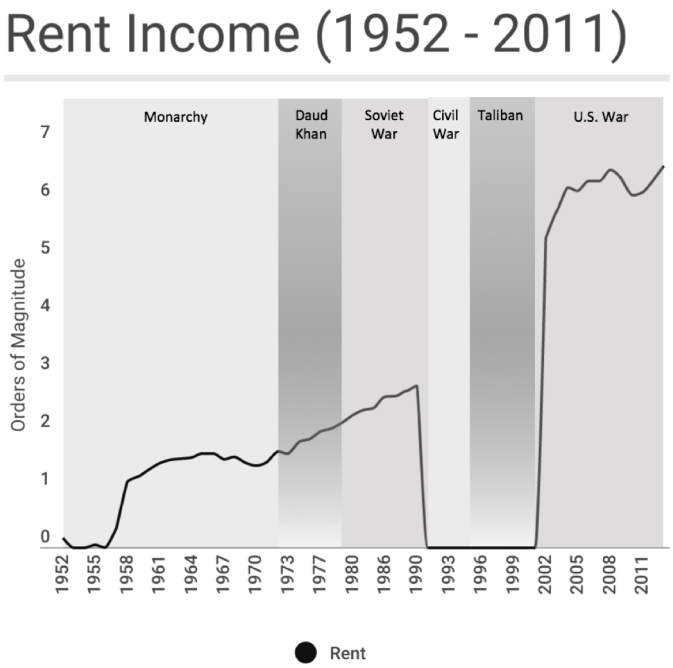

Figure 3 Rent Income (1952 – 2011)

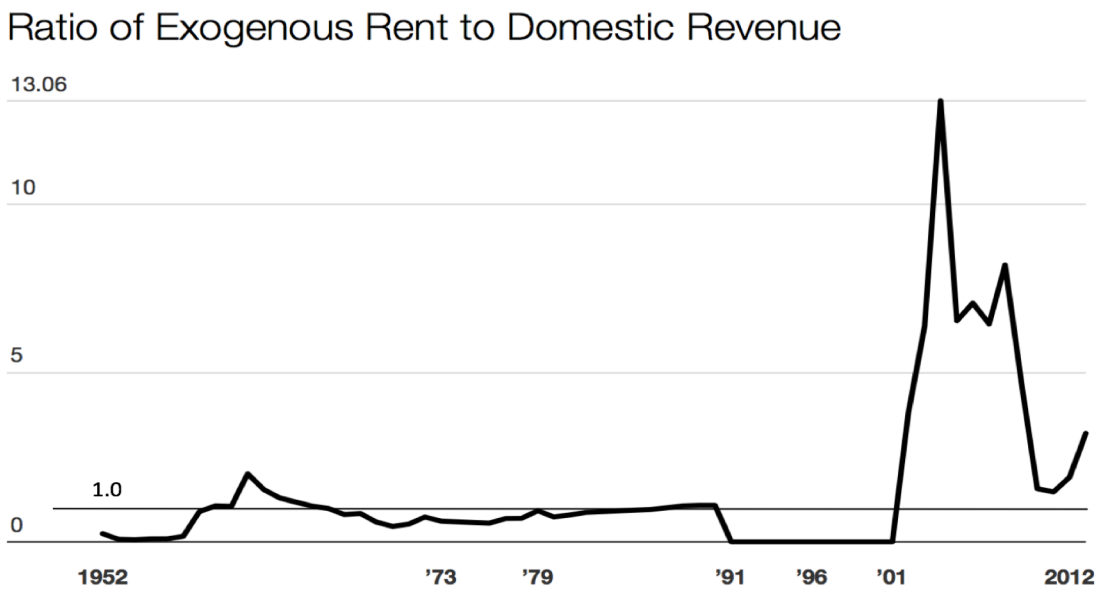

Figure 4 Ratio of Exogenous Rent to Domestic Revenue

Note: Sources for Figs 2 and 3-- 1952-1988 (Rubin, 2002 p.296); 1990-1997 (Guimbert, 2004); 1998-2001, Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization 2003 Yearbook; 2002-2014, IMF World Economic Outlook, April 2016; 2002-2004, Afghan Central Statistics Organization 1384 Yearbook; 2008-2010, Afghan Central Statistics Organization 1389 Yearbook; Ministry of Finance, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Fiscal Year National Budgets 1381-1392. In New Afghanis. Log-corrected rents is in 100,000 Afghanis.

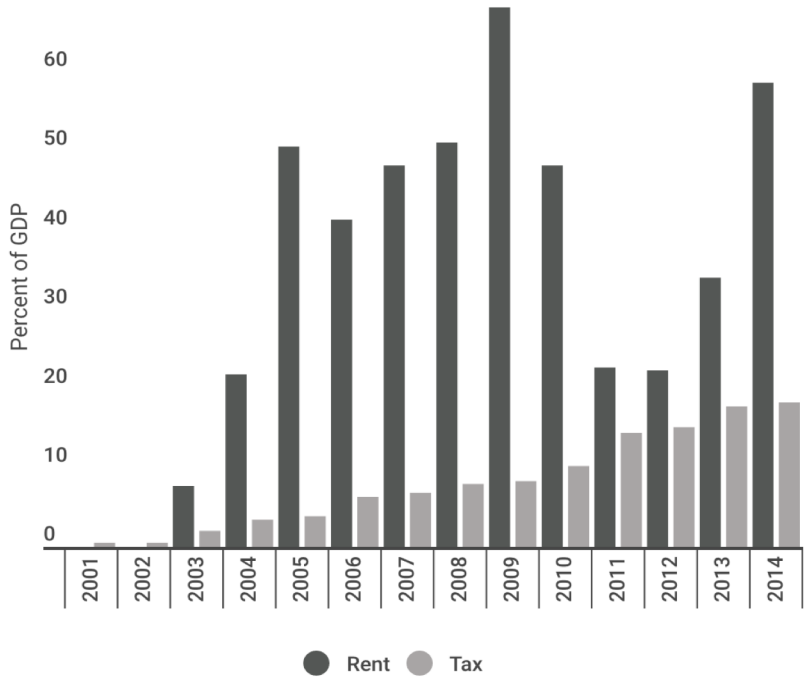

Figure 5 — Rent and Tax Revenue as a Percentage of GDP, 2001-2014

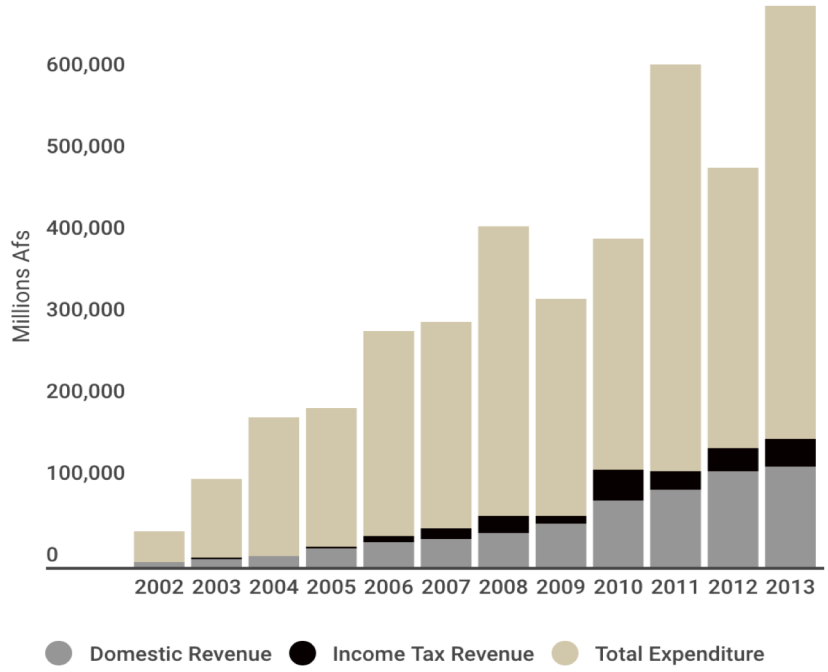

Figure 6 — Revenue as a Percentage of Expenditure, 2001-2013

Note: Sources for Figs 4 and 5-- 1952-1988 (Rubin, 2002 p.296); 1990-1997 (Guimbert, 2004); 1998-2001, Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization 2003 Yearbook; 2002-2014, IMF World Economic Outlook, April 2016; 2002-2004, Afghan Central Statistics Organization 1384 Yearbook; 2008-2010, Afghan Central Statistics Organization 1389 Yearbook; Ministry of Finance, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Fiscal Year National Budgets 1381-1392

Table 1 – Foreign aid spending on insurgent violence the year prior

R-squared	b	beta
.60	440.08	.78

Note: Sources--National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2016). Global Terrorism Database. Afghanistan file; U.S. Agency for International Development. U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2014. 2011 dollars.

the periphery. Quantifying the exact amount of "off-budget" rents is challenging because it comes in varied forms, some more easily trackable than others. These include: the leasing of land for foreign military bases, contracts with private security firms, off-the-books financial deals between foreigners and local elites, and opium cultivation. Nonetheless, we can estimate the lower bound of rent dispersion by analyzing the Afghan Ministry of Finance's financial forecasts and appraisals. Between 2002 and 2013, 56.3% of all foreign aid bypassed the center and accrued directly in the periphery; for every dollar in rent the Afghan state captured, individuals outside the state captured a dollar as well.

But the real figure is likely much higher. The estimate does not include, for example, the nearly $2.3 billion obligated by the U.S. military's Commander's Emergency Respond Program (CERP), through which U.S. military commanders make payments to locals for construction projects, base security, and more ("Department of Defense," 2015). Nor does it include contracts between the Pentagon or NATO and private Afghans contractors; the largest of these was a 2009 contract worth $2.16 billion, which was awarded to eight foreign firms who then subcontracted to Afghans. For comparison, Afghanistan's GDP that year was $13 billion (Tierney, 2010). As of 2012, there may have been between 60 to 80,000 private security contractors, the majority Afghan, working in country (Aikins, 2012).

Why did donors bypass the state? The immediate answer is surely that the new state lacked the capacity to enact the wishes of its sponsors, so donors found it more effective to administer aid and contract services directly. Those wishes related to influencing Afghanistan's development as a buffer against terrorism. A comparison of data on CERP spending by location with insurgent activity shows that CERP spending in a

given area was strongly linked to the prevalence of prior attacks or other anti-government incidents (Johnson, Ramachandran, and Walz, 2011; Child, 2014).

But 2002 and 2003 there was little insurgent violence, which raises the question of how this process arose in the first place. My argument is that insecurity did not exist in those early years until it was "produced" by local elites through various means, resulting in an insurgent backlash that convinced donors, in a positive feedback mechanism, to increase support for those elites. In this way, local elites were able to outmaneuver state managers in capturing rents. Rents accrue differentially when certain actors are better positioned to exploit resources than others; in some contexts, like the Democratic Republic of Congo, the rentiers' physical proximity to a resource such as diamond mines, and their embeddedness in subnational or segmentary groups with access to the sites, endowed their relationship with foreign patrons with the specificity of spatial control. Unlike diamonds, international aid is normally directed to the center, or accrues to institutions as opposed to individuals, because the state is usually in a position to enjoy the first-mover advantage. In Afghanistan, however, certain actors were able to spatially fix the resource of counterterrorism, and by doing so were better positioned than state managers to capture international rents. By fixing their ability to wage counterterrorism to particular locales, this rentier class endowed their relationship with foreign patrons with all the specificity of Congolese diamond warlords and Liberian rubber barons.

To understand how this unfolded, we should shift our gaze away from the state-centric view of Kabul and Washington to the granular periphery of the Afghan countryside. The following three cases will help illustrate how a well-situated actor is able to spatially fix an indeterminate resource like aid and thereby capture international rents.

Case One: The Weapons Caches of Uruzgan Province

Uruzgan province sits in Afghanistan's south-central highlands, occupying one of the most rugged terrains on the planet. 72% of the territory is mountainous or semi-mountainous, the fourth highest of any province in the country. About the size of Connecticut, Uruzgan contains no town larger than 70,000. Only 3% of the population lives in urban areas, and more than half live 25 kilometers or more from a government office. As of 2004, only 61% of the population lived in areas accessible by road during all seasons ("Urozgan," 2004). Various forms of sharecropping, subsistence agriculture, and pastoralism are the dominant modes of production, and it is a key stop on summer pasture route for Kuchi nomads. There are almost no natural resources save a small fluoride mine that has sat unexploited for decades.

Such a seemingly "non-state space," to use James Scott's term, may not appear to be a priority for state makers or their patrons (Scott, 2014). Yet after 2001, Uruzgan became one of the most important sites of rent capture in the country. The reason is that Uruzgan was the childhood home of many senior Taliban figures, including supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. After the Taliban's collapse in late 2001, a number of Taliban officials surrendered their weapons to the new authorities or to local tribal elders and returned to their villages in Uruzgan. As a military and political movement, the Taliban effectively ceased to exist. The first six months of 2002 are testament to this fact: there is not a single recorded instance of anti-state or anti-American violence in Uruzgan. Nonetheless, U.S. war planners judged Uruzgan a worthwhile focus because of its *potential* to become a site of anti-U.S. resistance.

In January 2002, U.S. special forces attacked two camps of pro-government officials situated in eastern Uruzgan, acting on false intelligence that the groups were linked to al Qaeda. Twenty-two Afghan government officials and civilians lost their lives in the assault, and nearly the entire anti-Taliban elite of the district was eliminated in a single night. Four months later, American commandos, again acting on false intelligence, killed five civilian farmers in the district of Char Chino in northwest Uruzgan. Then, in July,

U.S. warplanes bombed a wedding party in the district of Deh Rawud, in western Uruzgan, when they mistook celebratory shooting for anti-aircraft fire. Initially, American authorities claimed that coalition aircraft had struck a Taliban training camp, but soon reports emerged that 48 civilians, including many children, had perished. It was the deadliest American assault of Afghan noncombatants to date.

Ordinary Uruzganis responded to the repeated bloodshed with dismay and disbelief. Some religious preachers and former Taliban members said that the Americans were no different than the Russian occupiers of the 1980s, and called for jihad. But local elites took a more nuanced position, not condemning the raids as such but rather decrying the poor intelligence that led to them. American special forces teams were based not in Uruzgan but in neighboring Kandahar, and all three assaults were carried out in close cooperation with Kandahari officials. This, for Uruzgan governor Jan Muhammad Khan, was the root of the problem. "I have already told the Americans that they should at least coordinate with us for intelligence," he told reporters. "If Americans don't stop killing civilians, there will be a holy war against them in my province" (Brown, 2002; Shah, 2002).

The location of each raid was linked to a particular Taliban leader. The wedding bombing in Deh Rawud, for example, took place near the home village of Mullah Beradar, a senior Taliban figure. Beradar had reportedly retired to his village following the Taliban collapse, and Kandahar officials suggested to U.S. special forces to comb Deh Rawud district, leading to multiple raids culminating in the wedding massacre. For Jan Muhammad Khan, only hyper-localized knowledge could prevent such a mishap in the future:[3]

> As you know, Afghanistan is a country of tribes. We have many tribes in Kandahar and Uruzgan, and they have some enmity among them dating back many years. The foreigners don't understand this. I know the situation in Uruzgan. It is my home. I grew up there and fought there against the Russians. I know every tribe and I am famous there. The Americans don't know these things, and people use them to create internal problems. I told the Americans that they should consult with me.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all block quotes are my interviews.

> I can tell them where to go and which areas are important. I can protect my people and also defeat terrorism.

The local specificity of Jan Muhammad's knowledge was the commodity he was pushing onto the Americans, and it came at an opportune time. The wedding bombing had spawned a public relations disaster. Back in the U.S., the incident drew widespread coverage. In Afghanistan, it sparked the first anti-American protests. After consulting with Jan Muhammad and local elders, the U.S. established two special forces bases in Uruzgan, one in Deh Rawud district and the other in the provincial capital Tirin Kot, not far from the governor's mansion of Jan Muhammad Khan. It marked the first permanent American military compounds in southern Afghanistan outside the principal U.S. base at the Kandahar Air Field. The close coordination that Jan Muhammad had clamored for could now become a reality.

He converted his local knowledge, based on a broad network of personal contacts, into intelligence. Because there was no armed resistance to the Americans, he found a more creative method to prove his worth: the discovery of weapons caches. Surrendering Taliban had turned their weapons over to local community leaders, who sometimes buried them or stored them in the village. These caches were just the latest in hundreds that had been buried over decades of conflict. Jan Muhammad himself—a former anti-Soviet *mujahedeen* commander—had stored a number of weapons caches in the 1990s. Following the establishment of the two special forces based in July 2002 (just weeks after the wedding bombing), Jan Muhammad began leading U.S. forces to weapons caches unearthed, he claimed, by his intelligence network. U.S military records show that they discovered at least eight weapons caches in Uruzgan alone in the two months following the establishment of their bases—all due to tips from Jan Muhammad Khan. Of course, in a society awash with arms from twenty-two years of conflict, digging up old stockpiles was not difficult, if one knew where to look. A typical news report from the time stated:

> On Tuesday U.S. Special Operations Forces uncovered a cache large enough to fill three trucks during searches near Deh Rawud, in remote Uruzgan province. Deh Rawud was the scene of the incident earlier this year in which 48 wedding guests were killed by U.S. bombs after pilots claimed they had come under hostile fire. The weapons uncovered this week include more than 500,000

> rounds of ammunition found concealed in tunnels at a farm complex equipped with bunkers and fighting posts. According to a U.S. military statement, coalition forces were directed to the farm by Uruzgan governor Jan Muhammad Khan. ("Mass Bombs Haul Destroyed," 2002)

Some of the "discovered" weapons caches in fact belonged to Jan Muhammad himself, or to his allies. A news report stated:

> U.S. Special Forces soldiers found a cache of small and heavy arms buried in their own compound in central Afghanistan's Uruzgan province, the U.S. command reported Monday. It said the weapons were found at the compound in [Deh Rawud] district, the same area where a U.S. air attack on villages July 1 killed and wounded dozens of Afghan civilians… Special Forces contingents have been pressing a hunt for Taliban and al-Qaida holdouts in mountainous Uruzgan, home region of ousted Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. He remains at large - in Uruzgan, according to persistent reports. The Americans found, among other things, an 82mm mortar, a 75mm recoilless rifle, 20 grenades, seven rocket-propelled grenades, 28 cases of rifle ammunition and eight cases of machine-gun ammunition, reported the Army spokesman's office at the U.S. base here. Who buried the weapons was not immediately determined. ("Weapons found in U.S. Special Forces' backyard," 2002)

What the article failed to mention is that the base itself, and the surrounding property, were owned by a close ally of Jan Muhammad.

For villagers, delivering old weapons to the governor was a useful way of cementing ties to the governor. For example, a classified U.S. military report from the period read:

> Task force BRONCO REPORTS CACHE In the vicinity of TARIN KOWT. THE FOLLOWING SALT REPORT WAS SENT: Size: 2X Rocket propelled grenade LAUNCHERS W/ 25 Rounds, 2X RADIOS, 8X Assault rifle, 2X MACHINE GUN, 3X MUSKET, Activity: CACHE: LOCATION: TARIN KOWT, Time: 11:30 GMT. REMARKS: LOCAL NATIONAL TURNED OVER CACHE TO THE URUZGAN GOVERNOR WHO TURNED IT OVER TO Forward Operating Base Ripley. More to follow. (AFG20041215n68, 2004)

Each weapons cache discovery only furthered the American belief that the Taliban and al Qaeda were staging a comeback, encouraging them to strengthen their alliance with Jan Muhammad Khan. When actual Taliban members caught wind of this dynamic, they went to great lengths to clear their name and ally with the new government. Ghulam Nabi Khan, a one-time Taliban commander, renounced the *ancien régime*

after 2001 and joined the new government as a member of the attorney general's office. He surrendered his weapons to Jan Muhammad Khan—who presented them to the Americans—but this appeared to only whet the governor's appetite. He was repeatedly arrested by Jan Muhammad on accusations that he had not turned over all his weapons. Desperate to stop the harassment, he showed up at the U.S. special forces base pleading for protection. The Americans did not know who he was—and asked Jan Muhammad for advice. Jan Muhammad accused him of being a Taliban mastermind plotting to attack U.S. forces, and Ghulam Nabi was sent to the U.S.-run prison at Bagram Air Base.

Hashim Khan, from the Darefshan valley in central Uruzgan, was another important local Taliban leader who surrendered. But he too was repeatedly arrested and tortured by Jan Muhammad, who demanded more weapons. Finally, fearing another arrest, he fled the province. Khairullah Akhundzada, a one-time Taliban member, also from Darefshan, similarly turned over his weapons only to be arrested and tortured on the demand of more weapons. Then, the Americans raided his home and killed several of his family members. These actions soon turned the majority of Darefshan valley against the American presence, and Akhundzada himself rejoined the Taliban to fight the foreigners and Jan Muhammad's administration. A similar process unfolded in the central region of Mehrabad, where a prominent local tribal leader and Taliban commander named Mullah Shafiq had surrendered his weapons after 2001. His family was arrested and tortured by the American forces and Jan Muhammad, on the demand of weapons, prompting him to declare war against the regime and the foreigners.

Through dozens of such cases, an insurgency began to develop, and Jan Muhammad was able to "renew" the resource of counterterrorism: with actual armed opponents to the regime, he assured that the United States' continued reliance on his services. The following, for example, is a classified report from early in the insurgency period:

IED CIV Other 1 CIV KIA

> 2005-01-22 00:00:00
> (DEH RAWOOD/ RCIED ATTACK ON LN OFFICIAL) IN A DELAYED REPORT, ON 22 JAN HAJI WAZIR (THE YARDAK SECURITY CHIEF) AND HIS FAMILY WERE KILLED IN AN RCIED ATTACK 21KM N OF DEH RAWOOD. THE HAJI WAZIR HAD MANY ENEMIES, GOVERNOR JAN MOHAMMED IS CONDUCTING AND INVESTIGATION AND ASSERTS THAT MULLAH GHAFOR, A MID-LEVEL [Taliban commander] AND IED TRAINER CONDUCTED THE ATTACK. (AFG20050122n61, 2005)

Jan Muhammad converted this local knowledge to economic rent in three ways. First, the U.S. paid direct cash payments for actionable intelligence, which included everything from the discovery of weapons caches to the capture of terrorism suspects. Second, the US. linked its presence in the area with humanitarian aid as a means of currying political favor with the local population—i.e., winning hearts and minds. But the U.S. rarely disbursed aid directly; instead, it contracted the implementation of most humanitarian activities to local entrepreneurs and elites, using funding from CERP and other sources. Aid projects in Uruzgan began shortly after the wedding bombing debacle in mid 2002, when American Gen. Dan McNeil visited the scene of the massacre and promised a comprehensive reconstruction package for the area, which would include drilling 12 deep wells, building two schools, paving a 45-mile stretch of highway between Tirin Kot and Kandahar city, constructing a bridge, repairing a local dam, and donating medical equipment to a local clinic (Stojanovic, 2002). Doing so raised the question of how to find local implementing partners, labor, materials—which Jan Muhammad readily provided. (In general, because humanitarian aid was ultimately political in nature, U.S. military officials felt it natural to work with governor Jan Muhammad.) In this way, he won the majority of contracts for these reconstruction endeavors, and he operated at considerable margins. The reconstruction of a mud-walled school, for instance, could fetch a contract of anywhere from $50,000 to $200,000.

The third and most lucrative form of rent was linked to the infrastructure of counterterrorism itself: land leases for U.S. bases and private security militias to protect American military interests. Jan Muhammad seized land from rivals to provide for U.S. forces, which he was able to do because cadastral surveying and property registration had stalled since the onset of war in 1979. One source estimates that less than 10% of

rural properties (and only 30% of urban realty) have deeds (Stanfield et al, 2007). In the summer of 2002, Jan Muhammad seized a large stretch of land on the southern outskirts of Tirin Kot and leased it to U.S. forces, which they used to build their first base. In a few years, the base would grow to include an airport (servicing a civilian airline), a large conventional U.S. force, and barracks for allied units from the Netherlands and Australia.

Bases require personnel, especially for perimeter security. In the past U.S. soldiers would have performed this duty themselves, but it turned out to be financially and politically expedient to build a guard force by hiring from the local population. Officially, the U.S. called these perimeter guards "private security employees" and "defense contractors," but effectively they were militias. Within three years the perimeter forces for the two Uruzgan bases were a few thousand strong and included a praetorian guard for the governor's mansion and a special regiment that accompanied U.S. special forces on capture-kill missions. By 2006, local officials estimated that seven thousand such militiamen operated in Uruzgan province alone.[4] The majority of these men were introduced to the U.S. by Jan Muhammad, who had won the contract to provide security. A minority of these fighters contracted directly with the Americans but paid a portion of their profits as protection money to Jan Muhammad (e.g. Tilly, 1985). A militia commander named Faruq, for example, was paid $6,000 monthly by the U.S. for the use of his fleet of trucks, in addition to an $800 salary (Green 2012), a cut of which wound up in Jan Muhammad's pocket.

Jan Muhammad reinvested a portion of these rents into several business ventures, including construction and opium. The Taliban had banned opium cultivation, but following their overthrow poppy fields began blooming across southern Afghanistan. Crucially, until the reappearance of the Taliban in force during 2005-2006, it was access to the legitimizing function and physical protection of the U.S. forces that allowed certain cultivators to expand their operations. Jan Muhammad joined U.S. eradication efforts by directing

[4] According to interviews in Tirin Kot, 2009.

foreign forces to the fields of rivals, driving up the price of his own crop (de Munnik and Kitzen, 2012; Koontz, 2008, p. 473; Gopal, 2014).

Case Two: Hunting the Taliban in Kandahar Province

The province of Kandahar, which borders Uruzgan to the south, offers a second example of how a local actor was able to capture international rents through exploiting local knowledge. Kandahar is a stark contrast to Uruzgan: whereas the latter is a desolate backwater will little political importance prior to 2001, Kandahar was the country's cultural heartland, home to its second-largest city, and seat of Pashtun tribal power over the centuries. It was also de-facto capital of the Taliban regime, earning it immense importance in the eyes of U.S. war planners. American troops established a large base at Kandahar Air Field and worked with governor Gul Agha Sherzai. He had developed links to the C.I.A. when he was in exile in Pakistan during the Taliban regime, and after the invasion he pledged to help the Americans find fugitive Taliban leaders.

The Taliban leadership surrendered to Hamid Karzai on December 7th 2001, after which they retired to their home villages. The new government announced a sort of parole program, in which ex-Taliban could hand over their weapons and submit to surveillance. In early January 2002, the first group of Taliban leaders came forward to take part; the powerful Taliban ministers of defense and justice, along with a number of other senior figures, struck an accord with Sherzai's office and pledged allegiance to the new authorities. U.S. officials immediately balked at the prospect of allowing Taliban to go free, and under political pressure Sherzai reversed course. He began leading U.S. forces to Taliban homes, and fed them intelligence on the supposed whereabouts of supreme leader Mullah Omar. Sherzai's intelligence chief Hajji Gulalai said at the time:

> Every hour, we're getting reports of where he is from contacts in the area… America knows where he is. But we need to be in the same area to help guide any bombing. Without our help, America

> will end up bombing civilian areas. We haven't yet given the green light to the Americans to start bombing (Holmes, 2001)

Within weeks, Sherzai's men were accompanying U.S. special forces into the mountains, where they claimed Mullah Omar was hiding. Although the searched turned up nothing, the raids continued over the following months. Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansur was the Taliban's civil aviation minister, and he had retired to his village in western Kandahar province. A classified NATO report states that Mansur surrendered "a large weapon cache to the Ishaqzai leader BAGRID [Hajji Burget Khan, a prominent pro-government tribal elite] in Band-i-Timor. BAGRID, in an effort to appease then governor Gul Agha SHERZAI… and the CF [Coalition Forces], handed over the weapons," (Personal communication, January 4th, 2016). Despite this, Sherzai directed the Americans to repeatedly raid the area as a way to target Mansur, his friends, and his family. It began with an American raid on Hajji Burget Khan—based on false Sherzai intelligence—in which U.S. forces killed the eighty-year-old tribal leader and left his son a paraplegic. In subsequent months they arrested Mansur's cousins, his brother-in-law, and raided Mansur's house itself. In desperation, Mansur showed up at a government office in Kandahar city and begged local authorities to protect him, but they could not so he fled to Pakistan.

A series of similar raids targeted the rest of the Taliban leadership, forcing them to Pakistan as well. In an interview, Gul Agha Sherzai explained why the Americans chose to work with him, echoing the rationale given by Jan Muhammad Khan in Uruzgan:

> I know every tribe and every village in Kandahar. I was born here and I know every mosque and madrassa. I can help the Americans. If they coordinate with me and check with me before doing operations, they will never make a mistake. I could help them capture not just Mullah Omar, but the entire Taliban.

By leveraging his knowledge of the local landscape—particularly, his knowledge of who was former Taliban, and where they lived—Gul Agha Sherzai was able to capture foreign rents. As with Jan Muhammad Khan, this happened in three ways: U.S. payments for "actionable" intelligence, aid for

humanitarian projects, and contracts for the infrastructure of counterterrorism. This last category was the most lucrative, and began when Sherzai seized the land around Kandahar's airport and leased it to U.S. forces for their base. He supplied perimeter guards and, more importantly, "private security" militias to accompany U.S. forces on their Taliban-hunting missions.

The ex-Taliban who were the target of these missions began to regroup in Pakistan to resist the new government and its American backers. Mansur, for example, became a leader of the Taliban insurgency. In this way, Sherzai "renewed" the resource of counterterrorism, ensuring that American dollars and support would continue to flow his way.

Case Three: Highway Mercenaries

The cases of Jan Muhammad Khan in Uruzgan and Gul Agha Sherzai in Kandahar illustrate how actors can project an image of expert local knowledge to capture exogenous rents. But local knowledge was not always necessary for spatial fixing; in some cases, control of local terrain could attract revenues. In 2001, Matiullah Khan was an illiterate taxi driver who operated a route along the 45-mile stretch of highway between Kandahar City and Tirin Kot, the capital of Uruzgan province. But his uncle was Jan Muhammad Khan, and after the U.S. invasion he began working with the Americans as a militiaman. He was soon placed in charge of one of four battalions in the local militia, the 593rd Brigade; when a United Nations program disarmed three of the battalions in 2005, he was allowed to keep his by virtue of his uncle's ties to the foreign forces (Derksen, 2015).

As the insurgency picked up steam in 2006, Matiullah's force—numbering over 500 strong—cooperated closely with foreign forces on missions, particularly on the highway between Kandahar and Uruzgan where he'd once operated a taxi. The highway was becoming a key corridor for logistics, the main route of supply of the U.S.-NATO military base in Tirin Kot. Trucks carrying ammunition, food, construction supplies, and

other war materiel were under constant threat of Taliban attacks, so foreign forces contracted Matiullah to escort the convoys. He charged between $1000 to $1500 per truck, and in a typical week would escort around 100 trucks. Using this largess, Matiullah built the largest private army in Afghanistan. By 2010, his power had eclipsed that of his uncle Jan Muhammad Khan, who had been removed from the governorship four years prior. He was now *capo di tutti capi* of Uruzgan—despite having no formal government position. By 2014, nearly 4,000 men were under his command (Derksen, 2015). A tribal elder from Tirin Kot related that

> If you sneeze, you must first ask Matiullah's permission. If you buy land or rent a house, he must know. If you open a business, he takes a cut. He is a king with no equal.

He had become the main provider of base security and construction work, and had assumed his uncle's role as the most trusted intelligence source for the American military. All told, for these services he was reportedly earning between $500,000 to $600,000 a month, in a province where the monthly per capita income is $200.

Matiullah was the most successful of the highway mercenaries, men who developed into warlords by capturing rents by virtue of their control over local terrain. Each piece of highway in the rugged and landlocked country became a valuable resource. Goods and war materiel arrived by road and air at the two main foreign bases, Kandahar Air Field in the south and Bagram Air Field in the east. From there, local trucking companies delivered the goods to the more than 200 U.S. and NATO military bases around the country along a network of highways and smaller roads, which frequently came under Taliban attack (Tierney, 2010). Enterprising individuals raised private armies and contracted their protection services either to the trucking companies or directly with foreign forces. On the Kabul-Kandahar highway, for example, a Kandahari named Ruhollah, who reportedly began his career operating a security detail for CBS News, developed a mercenary force that protected convoys and became a major warlord. A U.S. Senate Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs report stated that Ruhollah

Table 2 – Major Warlord Rentiers

Major Warlord Rentiers - 2009

Name	Activity	Rents	Formal Position	Achieved Status
Matiullah Khan	Tirin Kot-Kandahar highway security, real estate	$6,600,000	None	Post-2001
Abdul Raziq	Spin Boldak-Kandahar City highway security, cross-border customs, drugs	$60,000,000	Chief of Border Police of Spin Boldak, Kandahar	Post-2001
Koka	Northern Helmand highway security, construction, drugs	$4,500,000	Chief of Police of Musa Qala district, Helmand	Post-2001
Pacha Khan Zadran	Loya Paktia highway security, real estate	$5,000,000	Senator	Pre-2001
Gul Agha Sherzai	Kandahar, Nangarhar highway security, US base security, construction, drugs	$70,000,000	Governor	Pre-2001
Ruhollah	Kabul-Kandahar highway security	$42,000,000	None	Post-2001

Note: Sources –Tierney (2010), Interviews with representatives from Task Force Shafafiyat, Interviews with Bacha Sherzai; Gardez District Development Council; Development Alternatives International, Inc.

> commands a small army of over 600 armed guards. His men engage in regular combat with insurgent forces. He claims extraordinary casualty figures on both sides (450 of his own men killed in the last year and many more Taliban dead). He readily admits to bribing governors, police chiefs, and army generals. Over a cup of tea in Dubai, he complained to the Subcommittee about the high cost of ammunition in Afghanistan—he says he spends $1.5 million *per month* on rounds for an arsenal that includes AK-47s, heavy machine guns, and RPGs. Villagers along the road refer to him as "the Butcher." (Tierney, 2010).

Table 2 lists some the largest such highway warlords and approximates the rents they captured in a single year at the height of the U.S. presence. Spatially fixing rents to particular stretches of highway allowed for two inherent processes of renewal. First, the highway warlords sometimes paid protection money to the Taliban to avoid being attacked; Sherman and DiDomencio (2009) cite an Afghan intelligence official who claims that companies paid up to 60% of their gross profits to the Taliban and criminal groups as protection, while in my interviews trucking company owners offered estimates in the 20-30% range. Second, the human rights abuses committed by many of these warlords motivated some to join the insurgency (Tierney, 2010). As a business model, highway warlordism depended on insecurity for profits, incentivizing actors to pursue rent-seeking strategies that ensured continued conflict.

Summary

To summarize these findings, sub-national elites used local knowledge to capture exogenous rents and renew those rents. They did so by taking advantage of a core problem of state formation: how to render local terrain legible? In the classic case, state makers faced a bewildering array of local practices, measures, social relations, and populations. Penetrating this dense milieu was no easy task, and successful state makers used a variety of legal, financial, and coercive methods to tax, conscript, and ultimately, order social life according to their wishes. Doing so required collapsing the complexity of local life into the variables useful for the state's purposes, a process that relied on a host of abstract measures and categories—such as ethnic groupings—that never quite precisely fit the nature of local reality. Nonetheless, those measures and categories managed to transform the very reality they purported to describe.

In the modern case, the complexity of local life was reduced not only to the variables required by the state maker but also to those influenced by exogenous factors; in this case, the international military presence. The outcome was similar to what James Scott found in his examination of fiscal forestry (understood as a metaphor of state building), which "illustrates the dangers of dismembering an exceptionally complex and poorly understood set of relations and processes in order to isolate a single element of instrumental value" (Scott, 1998). In the Afghan case, that element was "intelligence," and the desired outcome was short- and medium-term security. Similarly, "Utilitarian simplification in the forest was an effective way of maximizing wood production in the short and immediate term," Scott writes. "Ultimately, however, its emphasis on yield and paper profits, its relatively short time horizon, and, above all, the vast array of consequences it had resolutely bracketed came back to haunt it." In effect, the international system monetized the core problem of state formation: if in the past, a state-society struggle ensued over the domain of legibility, now a class of brokers arose to sell that information on the open market. The result, however, was to strengthen local social organizations at the expense of the state.

Rents and Social Structure

Rent dispersion produced warlords, which here I take to mean leaders who maintain privately-armed retinues. They operate autonomously of—although sometimes in alliance with—the state. In this sense, the Afghan state was unable to monopolize the means of violence after 2001. The power of local warlords frustrated the state's attempts to centralize; in 2004, for example, Kabul was unable to follow through on a local governance reform initiative to remove men like Gul Agha Sherzai from political posts because of warlord opposition. The question remains, however, as to whether there was a feature of Afghan social structure that allowed rents to produce state weakness. Put differently: independent of rent dispersion, does Afghan social structure or geography predispose the country to failures in centralization? This has been a common assertion in the literature. For example, Kimberly Marten (2006) writes that Afghanistan is "sparsely populated outside a few large cities, with many ethnic divisions straddling an inhospitable geography of mountains and deserts; no state could reasonably hope to exert powerful authority everywhere in the country." Authors on state formation in the non-western world echo this theme; Badie and Birnbaum (1983) link failures in state centralization to "the persistence of tribal structures, the crucial importance of kinship, and the limited individualization of property rights" in the developing world. Tilly (1975) remarks that state formation in early modern Europe benefited from the "weakness of corporate structures, especially those linked by kinship." This weakness allowed states to centralize, because "if lineages controlling land, labor and loyalty had sprawled across the European map, it would have been harder to break up the population into discrete territories, co-opt powerful members of local elites without extending privileges to their clienteles or reinforcing lineages as such, differentiate government from kinship, and so on."

Leaving aside whether this homogeneity accurately reflects pre-modern Europe or is itself an artifact of state formation, and whether the state and social organizations in "society" can be neatly analytically separated (cf. Sharani, 2002 for a critique), it is worth interrogating this claim in the post-2001 Afghan case.

In fact, the period immediately following the U.S. invasion was a propitious one for state building: tribal, ethnic, and kinship-based corporate structures were weaker in 2002 than at any time since 1979. In two important ways, decades of conflict and upheaval had fragmented Afghan society. First, the 1978-9 Stalinist government's land reform broke up holdings of some local elites, a disorganized and violent process in which many tribal elders and landlords were killed. And second, American financial and military aid to the mujahedeen promoted the rise of warlords and strongmen, many from humble origins, who would become competition with the traditional elite. Foreign rents and domestic repression combined to overturn social relationships and disorganize the pre-1979 social structure.

One result was that tribes in southern Afghanistan now had multiple claimants for leadership and were so highly fragmented geographically that they were extremely weak as corporate structures. The same goes for clans (sub-tribes) and ethnicities. Table 3 captures this social fragmentation as of 1990, the year after the Soviet withdrawal, in the districts of Kandahar province. The data is based on a United Nations survey from that year, which asked respondents to name the ten most important decision makers in their district; I then compared the names with published biographies and memoirs, and conducted a series of biographical interviews with those still alive (close to three-quarters) and with associates of the deceased. Overall, 59% of the most important decision makers across the province had attained their status during the jihad against the Soviets. One interpretation is that new elites simply replaced old elites. However, detailed data on the elite structure of Maiwand district suggests that new elites emerged alongside the old elites. In 1979, there were 17 individuals whom locals considered "elites," either as tribal elders or *maleks* (village chiefs). As of 2001, there were 157.[5] In many districts in Table 3, the most important elites were mujahedeen commanders; in some districts, there was even a complete turnover in the power structure, at least at among

[5] This data is from my forthcoming article, "Local Social Structure and Global War," based on sampling interviews in Maiwand district.

Table 3 – Social Fragmentation, Kandahar (1990)

Social Fragmentation, Kandahar (1990)

Percentage of 10 most important decision-makers who:

District	Achieved status pre 1979	Achieved status post 1979
Arghandab	0	100
Arghestan	40	60
Daman	0	100
Dand	60	40
Ghorak	90	10
Khakrez	40	60
Maiwand	10	90
Maruf	40	60
Nesh	70	30
Panjwayi	0	100
Reg	100	0
Shah Wali Kot	10	90
Shegah	90	10
Shorabak	50	50
Spin Boldak	10	90

Notes: Sources—("Afghanistan, Kandahar," 1991); interviews

Table 4 – Elite Fragmentation in Kandahar

Tribe	Elite	Status
Popalzai	Amir Lalai	Mujahedeen
	Ahmed Wali Karzai	Landed elite
Barakzai	Muhammadzai Elites	Landed elite
	Gul Agha Sherzai	Mujahedeen
	Nur ul-Haq Uloomi	Communist
Achekzai	Ahmed Shah	Landed elite
	Abdul Raziq	Americans
Noorzai	Arif Khan	Mujahedeen
	Hajji Bashar	Mujahedeen
	Ustad Haleem	Mujahedeen
Ishaqzai	Hajji Burget Khan	Mujahedeen
Alokozai	Mullah Naqib	Mujahedeen
	Izatullah Wasifi	Landed elite

the top ten elites. Strikingly, this occurred in areas closest to the Pakistani border and to Kandahar city—the parts of the province where access to foreign rents (C.I.A. patronage) was easiest.

Table 4 lists the leadership of the main tribes in Kandahar province and the source of their status, as of 2002. Leadership of nearly every tribe was split, which explains why tribes were unable to function as coherent actors in post-2001 politics. This is illustrated in the case of the border town of Spin Boldak. The two main tribes there, the Noorzai and the Achekzai, have historically competed for control of lucrative customs revenue (Aikins, 2009). After 2001, Achekzais (particularly, members of the Adozai sub-tribe) secured a monopoly on this trade by virtue of their ties to governor Gul Agha Sherzai and the American special forces. Noorzais suffered political exclusion and exposure to government and American raids, so that by 2006 the district was split, with the Taliban insurgency drawing heavily from Noorzais while the pro-government forces drew from the Achekzais. But Noorzais and Achekzais were unable to maintain this coherence across district and provincial lines. In Uruzgan province, home to a large Achekzai population, the tribe was split; in Khas Uruzgan district the Matakzai clan of the Achekzais was closer to the government, while the Alizai clan was closer to the insurgency. Similarly for Noorzais; in Maiwand district, the Taliban drew disproportionately from the Noorzai community, but the pro-government council did so as well. In Deh Rawud district, meanwhile, the insurgency had difficulty recruiting among the Noorzai population, which remained generally pro-government. And in neighboring Char Chino district, the Noorzais are split into the Durzai clan (generally pro-government) and the Daudzai clan (pro-Taliban). (Gopal, 2016; TLO, 2012).

The weakness of local corporate structures made the landscape ideal for state formation—which is why state builders and colonizers have long relied on the strategy of divide and conquer. The disarticulated nature of local social organizations creates a collective action problem in the face of state penetration; it is

precisely this weakness, in fact, that allowed the Taliban to rapidly overcome a divided landscape in 1994 and build a state. In his study of Garmser district of Helmand province, Carter Malkasian observes that the Taliban's success in conquering that province that year

> had little to do with the opposition of the warlords and tribal leaders or the appeal of Islamic law. In Garmser, the Taliban had received minimal assistance from the poor and downtrodden. The Taliban had succeeded because the tribal leaders and warlords failed to ally together…If the warlords had banded together when Mullah Omar had first entered Helmand in 1994, if Abdul Ghafar had not miscalculated the chances of compromise, then the Taliban would have been hard-pressed to capture the province. Abdullah Jan later said: 'If the great tribal leaders and warlords had stood together at Gereshk, we could have easily defeated the Taliban and defended Helmand.' Lack of unity and political cohesion had ushered the Taliban into power. (Malkasian, 2013)

This same disunity—involving the same actors—prevailed after 2001, yet produced the opposite result. The difference is rent dispersion, which allowed certain actors to simultaneously resist state penetration while obviating the need to unite with other local actors, which weakened the center and reproduced social fragmentation in the periphery.

Even if traditional structures have fragmented since 1979, there was one form of social organization that was powerful and cohesive at the outset of the post-2001 state-building project: warlordism. This raises a question about centralization: did the pre-2001 proliferation of warlordism inhibit state formation after 2001? That is, the Afghan state and its American backers faced a country awash in arms, militias, petty strongmen, and warlords—many of whom had come into existence *before* 2001. This has led some authors to argue that a "warlord culture" inhibited efforts at centralization, while others pointed to the fact that shortly after the invasion the balance of arms between center and periphery was heavily in favor of the latter. The implication is that even in the absence of rents, a newly forming state would have faced great difficulty in disarming the population. One scholar writes, "the existence of warlordism is not surprising, as the country lacks a tradition of strong central government," resulting in an "underlying culture of warlordism that is so deeply ingrained in Afghan society" (Sedra, 2002).

The literature has featured a long-running debate on the definition and nature of warlordism, which focuses on questions of legitimacy (e.g., state or non-state) and motivation (e.g., self-interested or ideological; see Marten, 2006; Giustozzi 2012 for reviews). Here I define warlordism by its unique logic of reproduction: warlords are actors whose social position depends on the maintenance of a personal armed constituency. Questions of legitimacy or illegitimacy are then beside the point; instead, the definition suggests that we can predict warlord behavior by their need to produce and reproduce their social position. If revenue streams dry up, warlords will seek to maintain their constituency through other means, including direct extraction from the population. This is why, when the U.S. cut off funding to the mujahedeen in 1992, they immediately began preying on the population by setting up road blocks, shaking down motorists, etc. It is also why they were forced to turn their guns on each other, unleashing a civil war that was as much about monopolizing trade routes and taxation as it was about control of territory. In this sense, warlordism is a phenomenon unknown to Afghanistan until 1979, the year which marked the first appearance of strongmen who maintained armed private retinues. As the following case study will show, the post-2001 state failed to disarm warlords not because of the *a priori* strength of warlordism as a social organization but because of the way exogenous rents allowed warlords to reproduce themselves.

Case Four: The 93rd Division

Drive west from Kandahar city on Afghanistan's main highway and after about two hours you will reach a small bridge spanning the Helmand river. The town here, called Gereshk, marks the crossroads between the north-south corridor of Helmand province and the east-west corridor from Kandahar to the city of Herat. For this reason, Gereshk has been valuable to the Afghan state for centuries as site of toll collection from passing traffic and as a strategic chokepoint from which to defend against incursions from western neighbors. When the Soviets invaded in 1979, the Moscow-backed regime's strategic emphasis was to hold the Gereshk bazaar and crossing as the surrounding countryside fell to the mujahedeen. After the Soviets withdrew in 1989, the Afghan state—still being funded by Moscow—began creating militias to defend

capitals and major crossing points like Gereshk. That year, the government established the 93rd Division, a conglomeration of militias under professional army command, to guard Gereshk.

According to interviews with former members, the 93rd Division numbered 3,000 strong at its height.[6] Upon state collapse in 1992, a mujahedeen-Communist alliance took control of the Division. One year later, it came under the command of mujahedeen leader Abdul Wahid, better known under the *nom de guerre* Rais-e-Baghran (the "boss of Baghran district"). Helmand province, at that point effectively independent of Kabul, had become a patchwork of fiefdoms controlled by a half-dozen warlords who sometimes cooperated and sometimes attacked each other. Control of the 93rd Division secured Rais-e-Baghran's status as one of the most powerful among these. The Division is an exemplar of warlordism: the armed force answered only to Rais-e-Baghran and its various activities were directed towards reproducing his and his followers' social position. They controlled the lucrative bridge crossing, engaged in the opium trade, and extracted from the population to maintain themselves.

In 1994 in Kandahar province, to the east, a movement of religious students calling themselves the Taliban emerged with the aim of ending warlordism and the civil war. Late that year, an advanced team of ten Talibs arrived in Gereshk and managed to convince Rais-e-Baghran to align with their movement (Martin, 2014). In an interview, Rais-e-Baghran claimed he did so because he was tired of the chaos of civil war, while others suggested an additional motive: the highway between Kandahar City and Gereshk was choked with warlord checkpoints, blocking traffic and severely hampering toll revenue at the Gereshk crossing. In fact, one of the early actions of the Taliban was to clear the highway to allow Pakistani trucking companies to conduct trade along the route (Rashid, 2010). Whatever the reason, Rais-e-Baghran's declaration of allegiance shifted the power balance in Helmand and allowed the Taliban to conquer the province with

[6] Martin (2014) estimates that it might have even been 7,000 strong at one point.

hardly a shot fired. The other warlords fled, and by the time they regrouped to launch a counterattack one year later, the Taliban had grown strong enough to withstand the offensive (Maley, 1998).

The Taliban successfully disarmed and dissolved the 93rd Division by co-opting Rais-e-Baghran and his followers into their movement. He was transferred to Kabul, where he directed the "Helmand Brigade," a sort of Taliban special forces unit that was active in the fight against the Northern Alliance (a group of northern warlords who were resisting Taliban takeover). As I will describe below, the Taliban slowly "professionalized" this unit by rotating in fighters from other parts of the country that had no prior ties to Rais-e-Baghran.

After the U.S. invasion, it was open season on the control of Gereshk and its crossing. In January 2002, Kandahar governor Gul Agha Sherzai introduced an ally named Malim Mir Wali, a fellow tribesman, to the U.S. Special forces—who proceeded to arm him and supported his reestablishment of the 93rd Division. Mir Wali had been a major player in Helmandi politics over the decades; once a university student, he was compelled by the Soviet invasion to abandon his studies and join the holy war. Using the drug trade and C.I.A.-sourced arms he became a major mujahedeen warlord in the Gereshk area, although after a few years he switched sides and joined the Communists. He was eventually driven out of the province by the Taliban, but the American arrival offered an opportunity to reclaim his former glory.

In the summer of 2002—shortly after the wedding bombing in Uruzgan—he helped the Americans build a base in Gereshk. His reasoning was identical to Jan Muhammad and Gul Agha Sherzai's:

> The Americans were going here and there and didn't know anything. They didn't know the tribes, the culture. Gereshk is a very complicated place and there are many enmities here [between people]. I told them that I could guide them, help them find the Taliban.

The Americans paid him to protect the new base, and he allocated 65 men under the control of his deputy,

Hajji Kadus. There were additional sources of revenue for the 93rd Division, including the bridge toll, opium, kidnapping, and "intelligence" to aid the American hunt for Taliban. Martin (2014) reports that the Division collected up to $2000 per a "Taliban" commander captured. This racket became all the more lucrative in the spring of 2003, when two American soldiers were killed in Sangin, a valley north of Gereshk. Interviewees in the area claim this had been the work of one Amir Dado, a local warlord allied to the governor of Helmand province (and therefore, to the Americans). But Amir Dado blamed the killing on "Taliban," and the Americans established a base in the valley. Contracts to protect the base went to Amir Dado's men, while Mir Wali used the incident to convince special forces to bring 93rd Division fighters along on patrols. He told the Americans, "Anywhere you go, take my men with you; they are familiar with the people, with the terrain, anyone you need will go with you" (Martin, 2014).

In fact, the Sangin valley was home to three-way drug war, raging since the mid-1980s, between Amir Dado and two local clans, the Chowkazais and the Mistirikhels. Men from the Mistirikhel clan were part of the 93rd Division, and Amir Dado's operation was protected by other forms of U.S. and Afghan government patronage. The Chowkazais, on the other hand, were without official sponsors and therefore exposed; both Amir Dado and Mir Wali used the U.S. forces to prey on them—hunting "Taliban" in Chowkzai areas became an American obsession. The second major focus of U.S. operations at the time was the targeting of Rais-e-Baghran, the former 93rd Division commander. After the invasion he had reconciled with the new government and retired to his home, but Mir Wali continued to feed "intelligence" to the Americans that he was running a Taliban death squad. Between the Chowkzai and Rais-e-Baghran operations, nearly a dozen men were sent to Guantanamo, with little evidence that they had ever opposed the U.S.

In 2004, the United Nations embarked on a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration program (DDR), based on best practices gleaned from peace-building efforts in Africa and the Balkans. The aim was to disarm the major militia conglomerates countrywide that were part of the Afghan Military Forces, an ad-hoc collection of warlord divisions and regiments. In Helmand, Mir Wali's 93rd Division was top of the

list. The program succeeded in removing Mir Wali as a warlord, but failed in dismantling warlordism in Gereshk—and may have even exacerbated it. The reason is because of the international presence, and the way in which exogenous rents allowed warlordism to reproduce itself.

Shortly before DDR launched, Mir Wali's deputy Hajji Kadus—who had been in charge of guarding the U.S. base—caught wind of the impending disarmament and convinced the Americans to put him directly on contract, officially removing him and those under him from the 93rd Division structure (Dirksen, 2016). Therefore, a significant minority— according to one interviewee, a former member, close to 30%–of the 93rd Division escaped disarmament by rebranding themselves as an American militia. A second faction within the 93rd Division escaped DDR by scoring a contract with the Texas-based firm USPI, a subcontractor of Louis Berger, to protect highway construction. They therefore remained armed as private security guards. A third faction, the Mistirikhel clan, now exposed to Amir Dado's predations without 93rd Division protection, absconded with their weapons and declared themselves "Taliban." It was only the remaining faction, closest to Mir Wali himself, who without options was forced to demobilize. In her study of post-2001 disarmament, Deedee Dirsken (2016) reports that only 121 of the 677 men (on paper) of 93rd Division were officially disarmed. Mir Wali became a senator in Kabul, but he retained ties to the "Taliban" faction, meaning he was supporting an insurgency against the very government of which he was a leading member.

Officially, the DDR process disbanded the 93rd Division, but it in reality it replaced the group with three separate militias: Hajji Kadus' group working with the special forces, a group with the American company USPI, and one with the Taliban. The United Nations failed to dismantle warlordism in Gereshk for two reasons. First, the disarmament program targeted certain commanders while allowing others to remain armed—incentivizing warlords to go underground and rebrand as Taliban to protect against predation. Second, foreign rents allowed warlords to reproduce themselves through shifting allegiance from the 93rd Division directly to foreign forces and foreign firms. Warlordism was not, therefore, a necessary feature of

Afghan social structure, which becomes clear when we examine disarmament in the absence of exogenous rents. The clearest case is the Taliban's disarmament of the 93rd Division in 1995. In classic state-building fashion, the Taliban dissolved the Division but absorbed the individuals into its bureaucracy. Creating Rais-e-Baghran's "Helmand brigade," based in Kabul, served two purposes. First, by physically removing the 93rd Division leadership from Gereshk, the Taliban effectively severed Rais-e-Baghran from the revenue that the strategic crossing could provide. (The Taliban administration took control of Gereshk and directed the revenue to its state coffers). Individuals within the 93rd Division's patronage network had no alternative source of revenue, such as exogenous rents, forcing them to either go home or follow Rais-e-Baghran to Kabul. Second, over its five-year posting in Kabul, the Taliban rotated members from others parts of Helmand and the country into the brigade. One former member recalls

> In the beginning we were all from Kajaki and Baghran [two areas where Rais-e-Baghran had strong links]. But new people started coming, and after some time we had many different people in our group. We were meeting people from all over the country and I was able to learn about Afghanistan.

I will further explore this approach to breaking patronage ties below. After 2001, areas in the country without a significant foreign presence, and therefore without rent influx, saw a much more successful DDR process. In the northern province of Kunduz, the forces of warlord Mir Alam, head of the 54th Division, had effectively demobilized by 2002 for lack of revenue. Dirksen (2016) writes that[7]

> The headquarters of the 54th in Kunduz had been quite empty before the [DDR] process, according to an observer who had visited in spring of that year. After the Taliban's ouster from Kunduz, many of the 54th Division's foot soldiers, though they remained on the payroll, had gone home. "There was no army," said a former high-level DDR official. "What were we disarming? A group of Afghan farmers who had been called to arms and since the fighting had gone back to farming."

[7] Nonetheless, Mir Alam re-emerged as a major warlord after 2007, when state and foreign funding began flowing to Kunduz.

Neopatrimonialism

State capacity depends not only on the monopolization and centralization of violence, but on the existence of institutions that can penetrate and order local life, extract resources, dictate rules of behavior, and regulate social relationships. To be sure, in the final instance these are accomplished through the barrel of a gun, but in day-to-day life, modern Western states employ legal-rational institutions to enforce everything from taxation and property rights to contractual obligations and marriage. As Weber discussed, these states depend on standardized, professional bureaucracies as a way to universalize loyalty and mitigate parochial interests. As an ideal type, legal-rational rule features officials recruited and employed according to technical qualifications, with fixed pay scales, who are promoted by superiors within or related to the bureaucracy. Ownership of the means of administration belongs to the state and not to any private individual. The administrator's loyalty is therefore to the state, mediated by the bureaucratic institution that employs her, and not to individuals or institutions outside the state.

Of course, this ideal type exists nowhere in the world. Patronage, clientelism, the "sale" of offices (through, say, campaign donations) are acute problems in strong and weak states. But strong states have had extraordinary success in using legal-rational rule to order life at the local level and inhibit alternative, anti-state centers of authority. Weak states, in contrast, have employed what development scholars call "neopatrimonialism" (Eisenstadt, 1973; Clapham, 1985; Bratton and van der Walle, 1997). Definitions vary, and some have critiqued the term as an imprecise, catch-all word for personalized rule (e.g., Pitcher, Moran, and Johnston, 2009). So here I follow Erdmann and Engel (1997), who clearly distinguish neopatrimonialism from both purely patrimonial rule (of pre- and early-modern Europe) and legal rational rule: "Neopatrimonialism is a mixture of two co-existing, partly interwoven, types of domination: patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic domination... These spheres are not isolated from each other. Quite to the contrary, they permeate each other: the patrimonial penetrates the legal-rational system and twists its logic, functions, and output, but does not take exclusive control over the legal-rational logic. That

is, informal politics invades formal institutions," (Erdmann and Engel, 1997).

With this conceptualization, a study of the development of neopatrimonialism in post-2001 Afghanistan requires an emphasis on both the formation of legal-rational and patrimonial institutions, and their interaction. This section seeks to demonstrate how rent flows influenced the interaction of these two domains to produce neopatrimonial rule. We should be careful not to take the comparison with the Western model too far, however. In Europe, bureaucratic rule arose through an unplanned process of centralization, extraction, and resistance that took centuries. Fischer and Lundgreen (1975), for example, begin their study of the 16th century development of English state administrations and the recruitment of technical personnel in the 9th century. It is doubtful that we can compare such a process to Afghan state building, which in its latest round has lasted a mere fifteen years. So instead I will focus on the *logic* of state formation in the current period, which when organized around rent flows inhibits the conditions under which legal-rational forms of domination can become hegemonic. That neopatrimonialism prevailed in Afghanistan is all the more surprising given that, unlike the European case, there was a historically unprecedented multi-billion-dollar effort by foreign nations to instill legal-rational rule. The implication is that so long as the structural relationship between Western and non-Western states is defined by rents and dependency, legal-rational rule will have difficulty developing—regardless of the expressed intention of state builders. The following case will examine neopatrimonialism in the context of constructing a national police force.

Case Five: Policing Uruzgan Province

This section will examine how patrimonial structures developed within a process of bureaucratization of the Afghan police, focusing on the rationalization of police procedures and staffing, the system of recruitment, and the role of rent-induced patterns of loyalty that undermined an *espirit de corps*. Historically, the professionalization of the police developed as part of general state formation; Bayley (1990) describes a diverse set of phenomena, including the decline of traditional authorities and the rise of

anti-state rebellions, as factors spurring the development of professional police forces. Post-colonial societies, on the other hand, usually inherited police forces from colonial administrations, or imitated European models. After 2001, the international community—in particular, the United States— attempted to imitate the Western model by establishing the Afghan National Police, a salaried, professionally recruited, uniformed force. It was a conscious attempt to curb informal policing and militias and bring Afghanistan in line with international norms and standards. In 2002, the U.S. and other donors established the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) to fund police salaries and other payroll costs; by 2014, the international community had spent $3.6 billion on police development ("Afghan National Police," 2015).

Through LOTFA funding and a various foreign partnering and mentoring efforts, the Afghan Ministry of Interior developed a national police bureaucracy. The very act of aid disbursal created bureaucratic routines and procedures; for example, in order to obtain LOTFA funds the Ministry of Interior was required to draw up payroll records through a variety of management systems, including a "Personnel Statistics Report," which it then submitted to the Ministry of Finance. The United Nations then disbursed funds to the MoF based on these records, which in turn paid salaries. The MoI developed the management systems with the aid of various American companies subcontracted from the Department of State and Defense. Meanwhile, the foreigners established a police academy, staffed with German trainers and advisors, which by 2007 had graduated 1,000 lieutenants and 2,400 non-commissioned officers (Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, 2012). Recruits were entered into a database, with biometric information registered, to create a roster of senior officers. In effect, it was the very act of interfacing with routinized, bureaucratized Western structures that forced the bureaucratization of the complimentary Afghan structures. A similar process occurred in many developing countries, where interfacing with NGOs and institutions like the World Bank forced the development of management and accounting standards in national institutions.

Yet while international-local interface spurred bureaucratization, it also incentivized patrimonial relations

and corruption. To begin with, because the police force was maintained almost entirely through foreign rents—LOTFA and other exogenous sources funded 97% of police maintenance and activity—the Afghan state's efforts were devoted to developing routines and procedures to appease donors (who were based in Kabul or abroad). The result was a striking discrepancy between bureaucratization in major centers like Kabul and those in the countryside. One Interior Ministry official said:

> I visited three districts in Logar [province]. There are no records of who has been arrested, who is in jail, how many police are working, what are the on-going investigations. We know nothing. In Kabul, we have files for everything because that is what the foreigners want to see.

Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh (2012) write

> In 2002–5, a series of visits to police stations by one of the authors around Afghanistan showed that orders and communications were being issued on plain paper and copies were not being kept, making it impossible to track the activities of the stations... [A] letter signed by Nangarhar [province] CoP [Chief of Police] Hazrat Ali was on the letterhead of the Bank of Afghanistan and was addressed to 'All Security Guards and Policemen', advised that an individual was missing and instructed them to help 'find the person he suspects'. It featured no names, no addresses and no explicit order to investigate a possible murder.

The reason for this center-periphery discrepancy is not because of any particular feature of local Afghan life, but because the Afghan state did not need to bureaucratize police work at the local level for either efficiency or control. Efficiency and local control develop when the state requires them to survive; but in this case the Afghan state depended on foreign rents and a foreign military to survive. Without the demands of viability, the LOTFA administration induced classic rent-seeking behavior in Interior Ministry employees. Officials in Kabul and commanding officers in the field took cuts of funds meant for the rank-and-file; one source estimates that a typical policeman received only 60-70% of his allotted salary (Graveland, 2008).

But more than anything, it was rent dispersion that spurred the development of patrimonial networks that invaded the bureaucratic structure. The first post-2001 police force arose as a conglomeration of pre-

existing militias. In the U.S.-brokered Bonn Agreement that divided the spoils of the invasion among various warlords, the former mujahedeen group Jamiat-e-Islami (belonging to the Northern Alliance) received the interior ministry and proceeded to populate the police force with its members. Meanwhile, at the local level various U.S.-allied warlords and militiamen took over police posts, forcing the state to rubber stamp their self-appointments (Ruttig, 2011).

As a result, the police force was heavily factionalized. Ruttig writes that, "For years, ANP commanders—when shifted from one position to another one—took along 'their' men, 'their' weapons, office equipment and cars." In time, some factions were gradually absorbed into the state administration as leadership of the MoI changed (Jamiat began losing control after 2004) and police chiefs were rotated out of their areas of origin. By 2011, twelve of 32 police chiefs came from a professional background (such as through the police academy), equal to the number from mujahedeen backgrounds linked to Jamiat (Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, 2012). But factions were most resistant to professionalization in areas with a heavy foreign military presence, where local networks could use outside payment and weapons streams to resist absorption.

This was the case in southern Afghanistan (where, incidentally, Jamiat was not strong.) There, Hamid Karzai initially distributed provincial positions with an eye towards balancing local forces and ensuring that no one actor grew too strong. So in Uruzgan province, Karzai managed a rivalry between the Popalzai and Barakzai tribes, which dated to the 1980s, by appointing Jan Muhammad Khan (a Popalzai) to the governorship and Rozi Khan (a Barakzai) as police chief. But Jan Muhammad's capture of foreign rents, described above, allowed him to amass a private army 800-2000 men strong (Dirksen, 2016). These militias were formally grouped with a half dozen other pre-existing, predominately Barakzai militias into the 593rd Brigade. These existed alongside Rozi Khan's official police force, numbering about two hundred.

When the United Nations began DDR in 2004, its first target in Uruzgan was to dismantle the 593rd Brigade

and empower the official police force. But as with the 93rd Division in Gereshk, Jan Muhammad found a way around disarmament. He transferred one group of militiamen from the 593rd Division into Rozi Khan's official police force. Crucially, he continued to pay these men—which he could do because of revenue he received from the U.S. special forces. This meant that although these men were subordinate to Rozi Khan on paper, in practice they remained firmly embedded in Jan Muhammad's patronage network.

He protected the rest of his militiamen from disarmament by securing American help in ensuring that they could guard U.S. bases and accompany U.S. patrols. One section of this group, under his nephew Matiullah, began guarding the highway to Kandahar, as described above. In 2005, Matiullah's forces became formalized as the local branch of the Afghan Highway Police. With his access to foreign rents, Matiullah managed to field a much larger and more well-equipped force than Rozi Khan's Afghan National Police—to whom he was technically subordinate.

The remainder of the 593rd Division—mostly Barakzais who had no foreign support—were the only ones disarmed by DDR. The process left Jan Muhammad as the most powerful armed actor in the province. The central government was even sending funds from the central police budget to Jan Muhammad, a reasonable attempt to bind provincial police to the state *if* the governor did not have an outside source of power. In this case, Jan Muhammad pocketed a portion of the funds and used the rest to bypass Rozi Khan and pay district police chiefs directly. All this left Rozi Khan isolated. Some of his forces were paid by, and loyal to, the governor and the Americans. District police chiefs were loyal to the governor, not the official police hierarchy. When the foreigners established a police academy in Kandahar, he faced difficulties sending men for training because Matiullah and Jan Muhammad used American connections to send theirs. Dan Green, who served in Uruzgan at the time as a State Department political advisor, writes

> The Afghan Highway Police [Matiullah's force] continued to encroach onto the ANP's [Afghan National Police's] turf, most recently by building a checkpoint in the city, and had been monopolizing the training slots we had at the Regional Training Center in Kandahar. The tensions were so high between the ANP

and the Afghan Highway Police that the ANP rarely ventured outside their compound and dared not wear their uniforms for fear of being shot at by the highway police (Green, 2012).

In 2006, Afghan authorities removed Jan Muhammad as governor on the demand of the Dutch, who were newly deploying to the province. To maintain balance (or so it appeared from Kabul) Rozi Khan was also removed as police chief. In response, the police force splintered, with Jan Muhammad's men continuing their work as an informal militia (still paid by him) or joining Matiullah's force, and the rest (mostly Barakzais) simply returning to their homes. That same year, the Afghan Highway Police was formally dissolved after incessant reports of banditry and drug smuggling, and Matiullah reverted to his status as an informal warlord. Those who had undergone training at the police academy in Kandahar simply reverted to their patrons, which was to be expected because the center did not create mixed units or take other steps to break factional bonds.

In 2006, a new police force was created. But with powerful patrimonial networks, flush with independent funding, now crisscrossing the province, the MoI had no choice but to build the new force by cobbling together the various militias. According to a confidential report at the time, between 300-400 of Matiullah's men officially joined the force but continued to work with their boss protecting foreign convoys along the Tirin Kot-Kandahar highway. In the district of Chenartu, the police force consisted of 150 men under the authority of a local strongman. Though paid by the government and wearing a uniform, they also protected foreign-funded reconstruction projects and refused to be deployed outside the area. In the district of Char Chino, a 30-man ANP unit was overshadowed by a 175-man force employed by Asia Security Group, a private security company owned by a cousin of Hamid Karzai.

The highly local nature of rentier dynamics meant that the official security structure differed from one district to the next, which impeded top-down efforts to rationalize police work or bureaucratize administration. In 2010, the official allotment of police for Uruzgan province was 2,213, but official payroll figures listed 2,782, and the provincial chief of police claimed there were actually close to 3,000 men in the

force (TLO, 2006). The true numbers were difficult to come by; in Deh Rawud district, a U.S. government audit found that an MoI personnel statistics report listed 139 policemen while payroll listed 312 ("Afghan National Police," 2015). Whether the difference reflected "ghost police" or not is unclear. During my research visit, I could account for only about 150 policemen.

In the absence of systemic professionalization, issues like whether police wore uniforms was simply up to the predilections and styles of commanders. I found police linked to Matiullah to be in uniform and relatively well trained, whereas police in Chora belonging to Rozi Khan's patronage network to be in civilian clothes, indistinguishable from tribal militias. His network had become remobilized as police in 2010 when his family received a contract from the German aid agency GIZ to provide security for a road construction project. (Rozi Khan had been killed two years prior by the Australian special forces in a case of mistaken identity; one of the principals on the contract was his son, Daud Khan, who was my host during the research. He was killed not long after my visit, reportedly by Matiullah).

In 2010, the U.S. pushed for the creation of new militias around the country that would aid the police and protect villages. Called the Afghan Local Police, the initiative consisted of locally-recruited units, trained by the U.S. special forces, to act as a community defense guard. In theory, the ALP commanders were to be selected by local village councils and would operate under the authority of the ANP, but the reality was more complicated. Some units were formed and paid by the ANP, others by the Americans, creating the same splintering and factional issues that plagued the ANP itself. Table 5 suggests that various patronage networks traversed the formal ANP and ALP structures. In Char Chino and Khas Uruzgan, ALP units were

Table 5 -- Afghan Local Police Recruitment - Uruzgan

District	Name	Selected by	Notes
Char Chino	Mirzan	Americans	Unit recruited from Durzai subtribe
Chora	Allahuddin	Assistant Deputy District Chief of Police	Unit recruited from Kakozai subtribe of DCoP
	Wali Muhammad	Assistant Deputy District Chief of Police	Unit recruited from Kakozai subtribe of DCoP
Deh Rawud	Jan Agha	Deputy District Chief of Police	ex-ANP officer
	Tor Khan	Deputy District Chief of Police	Volunteered
Khas Uruzgan	Mullah Neda Muhammad	Village Council	ex-Taliban, member of village council
	Shujayee	Americans	Bandit and criminal, recruited from US private militia

Note: Source: TLO (2012)

loyal to the Americans and operated independently of, and in some cases in opposition to, the ANP. In Chora, the ALP units were linked to a factional network within the ANP. It was only in Deh Rawud where ALP units were paid by the central government and subordinate to the ANP.

In summary, rents to the center simultaneously stimulated the bureaucratization of top-level police structures and undermined that bureaucratization by incentivizing rent-seeking behavior and corruption. Rents to the periphery, meanwhile, created patrimonial structures that invaded formal police structures. Jan Muhammad evaded disarmament through his ties to foreigners, and his access to exogenous rents allowed him to control a patronage network that traversed the official ANP force. In general, by 2010 the Afghan police had become one of the most corrupt and ineffective state institutions in the country. Within a legal-rational structure existed numerous cross-cutting patrimonial networks loyal to foreign actors or local strongmen. In Uruzgan, the patrimonial and legal-rational modes were fused fully in 2011, when Matiullah became the provincial chief of police. To accommodate a local strongman, the state had effectively ceded control of a public institution to private hands.

The Taliban: State-building Without Rents

Afghanistan offers an opportunity to study the effects of rents in state formation because of the unique sequence of events between 1994 and 2004, when two states arose under radically different conditions. If rent flows were at historic proportions in the post-2001 period, the period immediately preceding marked exogenous rents at a relative minimum. The Taliban state initially faced many of the same challenges as the post-2001 Karzai regime, including social fragmentation, warlordism, and underdevelopment. In fact, both states dealt with many of the same actors in the periphery—Gul Agha Sherzai in Kandahar, Jan Muhammad in Uruzgan, for example. In some ways, the Taliban's challenges were even greater, as it developed from a position of material and coercive weakness, in the midst of a brutal civil war and social dislocation. Yet the outcomes of state formation in the two periods could not have been more different.

The Taliban movement emerged in the fall of 1994, and within a year they controlled the entire south and southeast of the county. They captured Kabul in 1996, and by the eve of their ouster in 2001, at least 90% of the country was under their authority (Rashid, 2010). Within this territory, warlordism—in the sense of autonomous armed actors—vanished. Major strongmen either demobilized and retired, decamped to Pakistan or Iran, or were absorbed into the movement. (A small coterie of remaining warlords, grouped under the Northern Alliance, clung to about ten percent of the country in the north, from where they continued to resist the regime.) The Taliban were able to exert a degree of social control that was unprecedented in Afghan history. They dictated the "rules of the game," to use Migdal's term, exerted authority over virtually all peripheral social organizations, and set guidelines stipulating intimate aspects of people's lives. The most astonishing example is the state's ban on opium cultivation in 2000, which came in the midst of a major drought and struck at the economic interests of their core constituency, rural southern farmers and traders. While scholars debate the motivation, what is clear is that the ban was a staggering success, the "most effective drug control action" in modern history (Farrell and Thorne, 2005).[8]

[8] However, the ban may have actually contributed to post-2001 growth in opium cultivation because it forced farmers into debt, encouraging them to plant poppies once the Taliban were overthrown. See Jelsma (2005).

In terms of state capacity, then, the Taliban were perhaps the strongest state in Afghan history. While opposition activities did exist, there was nothing remotely close to the fragmentary nature of post-2001 society. What accounts for the Taliban's success? A key factor is that the Taliban state could not rely on foreign rents. The relationship between ruler and subject that characterized much of modern Afghan history was inverted. The lack of significant exogenous funding did not by itself ensure state strength—a host of factors specific to the historical circumstance of the Taliban are also important—but it created a situation in which a strong state, under the right conditions, could arise. Specifically, the relative dearth of exogenous rents had two effects on Taliban state formation. First, it forced the center into patterns of interaction with the periphery reminiscent of classical European state formation: taxation, conscription, and co-optation. Second, it left the periphery without the financial or coercive resources to resist state control or form powerful social organizations that could withstand centralization.

Rents

Exact calculation of exogenous rents to the 1994-2001 Taliban regime is difficult because of a paucity of records. However, it appears that the magnitude, as a percentage of GDP or domestic revenue, is low enough (in relative terms) that we can categorize the Taliban as a non- or weak rentier state (see for example Rubin, 2000). The only available record, from a 1997 Ministry of Finance document, states that 86% of revenue was domestically generated through direct and indirect taxation. It is unclear whether the remainder refers to revenue from state-owned properties and industries, exogenous aid, or both. However, a number of factors indicate that the majority of this remainder is not foreign sourced. To begin with, only three countries (Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) granted the Taliban diplomatic recognition. Of these, Pakistan was by far the most important as a strategic ally. It reportedly provided the movement with weapons and military advisors at key junctures, including its takeover of Kandahar province in 1994 and Kabul in 1996. Bilateral aid, usually in the form of cash payments to the office of supreme leader Mullah Omar or to the military front directly, appear to have been ad hoc and rare. One interviewee who worked

in Mullah Omar's office and helped oversee fiscal policy claims that direct aid payments rarely came and halted altogether after 1998. It was during that year that Saudi Arabia also ceased official aid on grounds that the regime refused to extradite Osama bin Laden. Even prior to 1998, however, Saudi aid was intermittent, according to the former Taliban finance minister. In 1999, a United Nations sanctions regime (Security Council Resolution 1267) banned financial transactions with the Taliban, making bilateral aid a risky proposition for member countries.

A more significant form of foreign support was private Pakistani organizations, including charities and political parties. They contributed humanitarian aid, but it was nowhere near the levels needed to influence the local economy—which was in dire straits for a part of the rule. They also encouraged madrassa students to travel to Afghanistan and join the Taliban's fight to the north. While some sources claim that foreign recruits as comprised the majority of the Taliban's army, there is reason to believe the actual proportion was much lower. First, a large portion of the "Pakistani" recruits were refugee Afghans studying in Pakistani madrassas. Second, the Taliban resorted to widespread conscription, suggesting that volunteer recruits—foreign or otherwise—were nowhere near sufficient to field their fighting force.

The final source of exogenous funding was Osama Bin Laden's network of Arab jihadis. Tensions between Bin Laden and the Taliban were always fraught (e.g., Van Linschoten and Kuehn, 2012), and anecdotal reporting suggests that Bin Laden gifted sums of money at various points to aid the northern war as a way of trying to ingratiate himself with the Taliban leadership. As with other forms of aid in this period, there are no records and little beyond anecdotal evidence, making it difficult to assess the scale or impact of such funding. There are reports from Taliban and non-Taliban sources that Arab money made an impact in parts of Kandahar city, where Bin Laden's aid helped furnish a new bazaar downtown, a center for Taliban administrators, and a new mosque (Schemer, 2011). However, these were exceptions to the general austerity of Taliban rule, where little was spent by the state or non-state actors on humanitarian or economic development. There is no evidence of significant Arab spending outside of Kandahar city or the ad-hoc

cash and weapons grants to the regime in its fight to the north.

Even with these sources, from 1998 onwards the government ran a budget deficit. Mullah Abdul Hadi Akhundzada, technical supervisor of the finance ministry, blamed the "ongoing unrest"—the war to the north—for the shortfalls. "The Islamic Emirate wants to expand its revenue base and control the non-productive expenditures," he said. "But the presence of abnormal conditions in this country doesn't allow for the implantation of these programs" (Alami, 2001). The insufficiency of foreign rents forced the state to extract from the population to maintain its rule. Taxation efforts under the Taliban far surpassed those of the Soviet-backed regime that preceded it and the American-backed one to come. And outside of modest development spending in Kandahar—clearly Bin Laden's attempt to appease the Taliban leadership, who had made the city their de facto capital—rents that did accrue did so to the state (in the person of Mullah Omar) or his entourage. Rent dispersion of the type that characterized the preceding and subsequent period did not take place.

Coercion and Co-optation

In controlling a state based only weakly on exogenous rents, the Taliban's relationship with its subjects was more similar to patterns in early European and high Ottoman state building than to modern non-Western examples. The Taliban paid little attention to building infrastructure or reconstructing the devastated country.[9] But their war effort to the north required significant resources, spurring the need to develop a taxation system. The Afghan economy at the time consisted of two sectors. The first was the transit trade from Pakistan. A generations-old bilateral trade agreement allowed goods destined for landlocked Afghanistan to enter through Pakistani ports and pass duty free across the border. A portion of these goods

[9] Maley (1999) argues that they, like previous Afghan rulers, hoped to attract foreign aid to fulfill this purpose, but without success

were then smuggled back into Pakistan and sold at below market prices, earning a windfall for Pakistani trucking companies and robbing the Pakistani state of hundreds of millions in revenue. The transit trade had stalled during the anti-Soviet war and subsequent civil war, but was booming under the Taliban. A Taliban source who worked in the transport ministry estimates that the state collected about $45 million in revenue from this trade, while official figures for the fiscal year of April 2000 to April 2001 suggest the actual amount may not be greater than $20 million. The yearly national budget was around $80 million (Zaeef, 2010), meaning that the transit tax accounted for anywhere between 25 - 60 percent of domestic revenue (or more, given that in later years the government operated at a budget deficit).

The second sector of the economy was agriculture, both subsistence and cash-crop cultivation. In the latter category, opium was by far the most lucrative product; by the mid-1990s, Afghanistan had become the world's largest exporter, accounting for about 75% of global production. Opium did not induce the rent-seeking dynamics associated with natural resources, however, because production was legal and subject to open, peaceful competition. Rubin (2000) writes

> Afghans, including the Taliban, earn relatively little from this crop. Superprofits in the global drug market derive from the risk premium of marketing an illegal commodity in wealthy societies. Producers and marketers of the raw material share in these profits only if they develop vertical integration through to the retail markets, as the Colombian cocaine cartels did in the 1980s... Afghan opium traders, however, generally sell only to the border. A few are involved as far as the Persian Gulf, but not in the lucrative retail markets.

The Taliban taxed opium production (and other agriculture) using *zakat* and *ushr*, the Islamic religious tithes. Rubin (2000) estimates they raised about $30 million in revenue from opium taxation, meaning it was only second in importance to the transit trade. We have no estimate of the value of remaining non-opium taxation, a figure which is all the more difficult to ascertain because much of the taxation was in kind.[10] Even assuming the extreme case, that *all* tax revenue derived from poppies, it would put the income

[10] We have, for example, numerous reports in the Taliban press such as: "Four robbers were arrested in the suburbs of Faryab province and handed over for further investigation to the law enforcing agencies. Two of the robbers had looted 41 mounds of

tax-to-budget ratio at 0.375, over twice as much as the best post-2001 year. This suggests that the Taliban state relied heavily on direct taxation to meet its budgetary needs—much more so than the post-2001 state. The Taliban's ability to collect direct taxes was unique in recent Afghan history. Traditionally, the availability of rents meant that the Afghan state never put much effort into developing tax capacity. Beginning in the 1960s, the Afghan state shifted from direct to indirect taxation, such as customs, as the primary revenue generation strategy in order to avoid confrontations with the periphery. In the 1980s, mujahedeen commanders began imposing taxes on wheat and poppies in their areas of control and used it to fund their insurgency, a practice that continued during the civil war and extended to road tolls. After 2001, Afghan government officials on the district and village level would collect taxes as personal revenue, which they were able to do most successfully when they had foreign support.

At first, the Taliban's tax collection was ad-hoc and beset by problems similar to those that had plagued other administrations. But by 1997, they had largely solved the problems of loyalty and leakage in three ways. First, they relied on the unique position of religious actors in local society. They set up a direct taxation system relying on village mullahs, who were deputized to collect taxes based on harvests (5 to 10%, called *ushr*) and on wealth (2.5%, called *zakat*). It was already a longstanding practice in villages to support their own mullahs through *zakat*, so the Taliban's system amounted to a natural extension of local practice. Second, the use of mullahs—itinerant preachers who were often from outside the community, or from minority tribes—minimized the potential of favoritism or the formation of alliances. Third, mullahs were well-placed to solve the classic problem of legibility; they knew everyone in the village and were able to easily monitor harvests.[11]

Mullahs delivered taxes to the local administration, usually the district governor, who would turn it over to

cotton from stores of the Ushr and Zakat department of the Islamic Emirate" ("A number of robbers," 2001).

[11] In some cases, the tax collector was not a preacher, but he worked with the local mullah.

officials dispatched directly from supreme leader Mullah Omar's office in Kandahar. (Omar's office, in turn, supplied the various ministries in Kabul with their budgetary needs). Thus the whole system hinged on the loyalty and effectiveness of the district administrator. This was the weak link in the revenue chain in post-2001 society; when administrators were allied to local strongmen or had foreign support, little to no revenue made its way to the center. The Taliban ensured the loyalty of local administration in the same way that they forestalled the development of regional powerbrokers, by appointing those from outside the community to rule and by rotating officials so that no individual remained in a post long enough to develop strong local ties. In this way, local administrators remained tied to the center. This was the *de facto* rule not only in the north and major cities like Kabul, where the Taliban lacked a social base, but among their core constituency in the south. Table 6 lists the percentage of time (in months) that selected southern districts was under the authority of a non-local administrator. For example, the Taliban ensured that Nahr-e-Saraj district, which contains the crucial toll town of Gereshk, was always administered by an outsider—whereas under the post-2001 American-backed regime it was *never* administered by an outsider. The district of Deh Rawud, in Uruzgan, is home to many senior Taliban leadership and yet— or perhaps, because of this—the Taliban ensured that the district was almost always in outside hands, the opposite of the post-2001 rule. A recent study found that between 2012-2014 only 22% of district police chiefs in an eight-province sample are from outside the districts in which they serve, contrary to official interior ministry policy that they be rotated every three years (Giustozzi and Ishaqzadeh, 2015). There is no comparable data for the Taliban period, but in four districts for which we have detailed information (Nad-e-Ali, Nahr-e-Saraj, Maiwand, and Deh Rawud) 62% district governors were outsiders. (The Taliban did not employ district police chiefs, so the role was effectively assumed by the district governor).

Table 6 – Non-Local Rule

Non-Local Rule

Percentage of time area was ruled by a non-local official

Post	Communist	Civil War	Taliban	Americans
Helmand PG	71.4	0	100.0	54.5
Nad-e-Ali DG	0	0	57.1	0
Nahr-e-Saraj DG	57.1	0	100.0	0
Helmand CoP	*	0	*	36.4
Nad-e-Ali CoP	0	*	*	0
Nahr-e-Saraj CoP	*	*	*	9.1
Maiwand DG	50.5	0	75.0	0
Deh Rawud DG	10.5	0	90.0	5.9

Sources: TLO (2009); TLO (2012); Martin (2014); Gopal (2016). * indicates no information available. The Taliban did not employ district-level chiefs of police.

On average, police chiefs serving in the north as of 2014 had been in office an average of 485 days (Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, 2015), whereas the average tenure for the Taliban chief of police of the northern province of Balkh (the only province for which data is available) was 256 days—an astonishing level of turnover that may have sacrificed administrative efficiency for state consolidation. The Taliban's use of non-local officials and their frequent rotation is a method for preventing local ties and inducing solidarity to the state, embodied in the class of officials who administer it. Bearman (1991) describes a similar process in the decoupling of "military" and "civil" societies that mark modern armies. It is reminiscent of the Ottoman strategy of forestalling threats from the periphery by frequent rotation of state officials (as illustrated in Barkey, 1994). The strategy became so central to the Taliban's logic for state building that it was exalted into a religious virtue. A 2000 tract by a Taliban supporter and ideologue Mufti Abdul Rashid Ludhviani entitled *Obedience to the Amir* stated

> Posts and responsibilities should be rotated within an appropriate duration. No one should stay in a post so long as to become synonymous with that office, that they start to think that the post cannot exist without them, that they are indispensable. In this regard the process of changes and transfers within the Taliban Movement ordered by the *Amir ul-Mu'mineen* [Mullah Omar] is very positive. God willing it will be extremely fruitful in the long run. (Ludhviani, 2015)

Their success in this strategy compared to the Karzai regime's is not because of the latter's lack of will or foresight. The state (and other foreign actors, like the United Nations) repeatedly attempted to rotate local officials—rotation was enshrined in the rules of various ministries—but failed to do so because local elites were able to capture rents or ally themselves with powerful local actors who did. Under those conditions, removing local powerbroker risked turning them against the state in armed rebellion; when, for example, Hajji Gulalai, intelligence chief of Kandahar province, was removed in 2003 he began attacking state forces. He was able to do so because of arms provided by Gul Agha Sherzai and the Americans. The government presumably learned its lesson, because when they removed Sherzai as governor a year later, they transferred him to Nangarhar province, thereby compensating him by awarding him control of the lucrative Torkham border crossing with Pakistan.

The second pillar of Taliban state building was conscription. The persistent demand for troops stemmed from the northern war, where Talib forces suffered a high attrition rate. Early on, the Taliban resorted to impressment, rounding up madrassa students as needed in conquered areas and forcing them, at gun point, to the battlefield. By 1997, however, they had developed a rationalized system across most of the country. Each village traditionally elected or chose through consensus a *mirab*, a water-keeper, who ensured the functioning of irrigation channels and sluice gates and attempted to allocate water fairly to the various households. The Taliban enlisted *mirabs* to draw up a roster of fighting-age males in the community, which was passed on to a local council composed of mullahs and Taliban members (Martin, 2014). The council then called up the draftees, dispatching police if necessary. Like the mullah, the *mirab* knew everyone in the village and therefore solved the problem of legibility. By deputizing taxation and conscription duties to different individuals, the Taliban ensured a separation of powers. And like the mullah, the *mirab* was in theory positioned to be relatively immune from local power struggles because he was chosen by agreement of all families in the village.

Conscription was extraordinarily successful—in his study of Helmand province, Martin (2014) reports that

every interviewee knew someone who was drafted, if they had not been drafted themselves. Only those who could pay a large "donation" were spared. A significant portion of Taliban fighters who wound up in Guantanamo after the American invasion appear to have been conscripted. As is often the case, conscription caused immense hardship and provoked resistance. In January 1997 several villages in Kandahar rebelled, killing Taliban recruiters ("Four killed in revolt," 1998). Rashid (2010) reports similar anti-conscription uprisings that year in other parts of the country. In January 2000, "400 tribal leaders from four eastern provinces—Paktiya, Khost, Paktika and Gardez— forced the Taliban to replace local governors, as they protested the conscription drive by the Taliban and the sharp rise in taxes, which they complained were being sent to Kabul rather than being used for local relief" (Rashid, 2010). Draft dodgers were common, even though it was a crime punishable by death.

The shift from the Taliban's early ad-hoc policies of taxation and impressment to the systematized routines and modest bureaucratic infrastructure that prevailed after 1997 was a direct consequence of the northern war. The massacre of Taliban forces in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif that year was a major blow to the war effort. In response, the Taliban nearly doubled the frontline military budget to $300,000 a week (Zaeef, 2010). This posed considerable revenue challenges, particularly in a country where agricultural production was not completely monetized. In addition to standardizing the system of mullahs and *mirabs* for taxes and men, the state developed routines to bring various industries under its control in order to better extract revenue. Mullah Zaeef, who headed the independent transport directorate in 2000, writes that "in some provinces the Taliban controlled the local [transport] departments and were dividing the profit among themselves, while in other places the offices were managed by the private sector. There was no clear government system in place" (Zaeef, 2010). To address the issue, he nationalized the system of transport agents (middle men who arranged for trucks to reach their destinations) and "hired department managers who were responsible for depositing the income of their department each day into a centralised bank account. These payments were logged, which reinforced the rotation system and made sure each driver got his turn" (Zaeef, 2010). Similarly, in 1998 the regime introduced registration, licensing, and transfer fees

on vehicles—something the post-2001 regime has yet to successfully do outside of a few major cities. In 2000, the government registered over a million vehicles and raised $600,000 in revenue from new licenses alone ("In year 1421," 2001). A member of the traffic department said

> We spent 11 months traveling to every part of the country. We arrived in a village and met the local shura, who introduced us to the mullah. He would take us to whoever had a vehicle and we would register it and issue documents.

Another potentially lucrative source of revenue was taxes on the transfer of title deeds, and to this end the government launched an initiative to update property records, which had barely seen use since 1979. Although the state collapsed before this initiative could be expanded outside of Kabul and Kandahar, the comparison with the post-2001 period is striking. There was four times as many court-prepared deeds during the last four years of the Taliban than the first four years of the Karzai government (Burke, 2010).

It would be a mistake to conclude from this discussion that the Taliban had developed legal-rational rule. Many relations were highly personalized, particularly around the leader Mullah Omar, and formal institutions were weak. However, those arenas amenable to revenue generation were developing systematized features. The point for comparative purposes is that this arose from the relationship between the state and its subjects; when neither the center nor the periphery could rely on exogenous rents, patterns of interaction developed that could not be found in post-2001 Afghanistan.

Conclusions

The post-2001 Afghan experience of state formation is unique in the volume of aid it attracted and the geopolitical importance it held. However, the basic outlines of the Afghan case are similar to many of the most unstable, war-wracked countries of Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East. The states in the lower right quadrant of Figure 1 all experienced rent dispersion, and their evolution bears some important similarities to Afghanistan. For example, Maren (1997) demonstrates that the dispersion of massive food aid to Somalia precipitated factionalization and warlordism that led to civil war. What appeared to be a war

between various clans was in fact a complex intra-warlord struggle around rents and territorial control, based ultimately on foreign aid. In 2006, after over a decade of statelessness and warlordism, a movement called the Union of Islamic Courts emerged in an attempt to put an end to the chaos. As a state-building project, they were remarkably similar to the Taliban in their emphasis on Islam and religious law as a solution to warlordism. The UIC state began developing processes of extraction similar to the Taliban's, and like them they were soon overthrown by a foreign state. The Ethiopian invasion put an end to the UIC experiment and inaugurated a new round of insurgency and fighting—fueled, as in Afghanistan, by foreign rents.

In Liberia, Presidents William Tubman's (1944-1971) and William Tolbert's (1971-1980) privatization of communal landholdings opened the country to foreign concessions; by 1980, for example, about 3,000 mostly internationally-owned rubber estates were in operation (Sawyer, 1992). In certain areas, local elites contracted with the firms to provide laborers and other services; the resources and connections they gained propelled them into local strongmen. William Reno writes, "The decentralized, flexible, and transnational nature of the commercial organizations made them ideal partners to help elite families shift the basis of exploitation of economic opportunities. Commercial operations shifted away from heavy reliance on access to state power, and thus on presidential patronage, to establishing independent connections to global markets and regional non-state actors," (Reno, 1999). In the face independent local strongmen, the state avoided penetration of the periphery and instead looked abroad for political and fiscal support. By 1979, for example, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and the Liberian Iron Mining Company accounted for more than half of state revenue (Reno, 1999). Through the 1980s, President Samuel Doe balanced his strongmen rivals with heavy international backing. On the one hand, aid organizations and multinationals flocked to the country, the former lured by the chance to administer state services and the latter by a business-friendly environment—enriching themselves and Doe in the process. On the other, to protect his rule Doe did not touch the commercial networks of the strongmen. When the U.S. and international creditors cut off aid by the end of the decade, the state lost what little ability it had to fend off the machinations of

sub-national rivals and strongmen. Not long after, Charles Taylor, a former member of President Doe's cabinet, raised a guerrilla army with the aim of overthrowing the state, ushering in the Liberian civil war. Rent dispersion does not necessarily always lead to civil war, but it always induces state weakness. In countries were the periphery has an advantage over the center, the state is forced to strike informal deals with local powerbrokers. This process, which Bayart calls "elite accommodation" (Bayart, 1989), is the opposite of classical state-led incorporation. There, the state absorbs local powerbrokers into its administration as a means of co-opting them; it links the powerbroker's social position to loyalty to the state. The Taliban's absorption of Rais-e-Baghran, commander of the 93rd Division, is the quintessential example of such co-optation. With elite accommodation, though, the local powerbroker co-opts the state. Matiullah's ascension to chief of police of Uruzgan is one such example; it merely formalized his de facto role but did not bring additional authority to the state or further its penetration into the periphery.

The broader lesson of the Afghanistan case is that local social structures that appear to inhibit state centralization do not necessarily exist prior to the state or the international community. Corporate organizations of the periphery are always the products of this three-way interaction. For example, Wimmer (2002) describes the role of the rise of the nation state in producing new forms of legitimacy which can, under certain conditions, politicize ethnicity. Scott (2014) describes the construction of ethnicities around communities fleeing states for the uplands. A number of authors have commented on the role of states in producing tribalism in the Middle East (e.g., Khoury and Kostiner, 1990; Nakash, 2003). In Afghanistan, it was the Safavid empire that imposed a corporate, hierarchical Durrani-Ghilzai tribal structure onto Pashtuns (Rubin, 2002). For generations, these structures proved to be great impediments to state centralization. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the emergence of the market and the shift towards cash crop cultivation disorganized these structures and produced new corporate groups (Anderson, 1978). The 1979 invasion and exogenous rents fragmented social organization once again, producing new social groupings organized around the state and foreign aid. What counts as a "tribe" today looks radically different in membership and forms of solidarity than what counted as such four or five generations ago—the only thing in common

is a shared name.

Certain non-Westerns states are not weak because their societies are strong. Instead, my constructivist interpretation calls into question the very notion that "societies" can be strong or weak independent of the process of state formation. The center and the social organizations of the periphery are constantly making and remaking one another. They selectively ally, co-opt, and oppose each other, depending on the circumstances and the balance of forces. This delicate dance unfolds in an international arena, meaning foreign organizations and states are equally central actors in the drama of state formation.

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2

Local Social Structure and Global War: Explaining Insurgency

ABSTRACT

Prevailing theories of political violence are poor predictors of insurgency in Afghanistan; accounts of identity (including ethnicity and religious fundamentalism) and military opportunity (including type of terrain) are unable to explain the pattern of Taliban mobilization and the mosaic of anti-state and anti-American violence within the country. This article demonstrates that such violence is instead linked to the degree to which local elites are excluded from state patronage. The U.S. military presence incentivized the nascent Afghan state to incorporate some local elites and exclude others; the article uses detailed data of elite networks to predict the pattern of differential incorporation and insurgency. Afghanistan's structural similarity to Middle Eastern and African countries undergoing state formation suggests that center-periphery incorporation strategies, and the intersection between local social structure and international imperatives, may play a central role in modern-day conflict wracking newly-formed states.

Introduction

The war in Afghanistan is the longest in American history, but prevailing theories fail to explain the anti-American insurgency's causes or predict its patterns of violence. In part, this is because until recently the sociological literature has neglected modern-day civil wars in favor of historical work on state formation and revolution in early modern Europe. However, as Wimmer (2014) points out, sociologists are now increasingly turning their attention to conflict in the post-World War II era—traditionally the domain of political science—and by doing so are bringing questions of power, legitimacy, and the organizational capacity of the state to bear on the subject.

Like historical cases in early modern Europe, post-2001 Afghanistan sits at the juncture of civil war and state formation. Unlike historical precedent, however, these processes unfold within an international state system. This study uses these insights, along with detailed network data of local elites, to explain the causes of Afghanistan's Taliban-led insurgency and to predict patterns of violence within the country. Today, the nexus of civil war and state formation is not unique to Afghanistan; to varying degrees, a number of countries in the Middle East and Africa occupy similar positions. This suggests that a theory of political violence in Afghanistan can, *mutatis mutandis*, help explain key features of modern-day internecine conflict in newly forming states.[12]

A Puzzle

The sparse desert stretches of southern Afghanistan harbor many secrets of state formation and political violence. According to local lore, it was there that a smalltime preacher named Mullah Omar raised an army

[12] Certainly, Afghanistan is unique in many aspects, as are various Middle Eastern and African countries. My contention, however, is that there are certain structural similarities relating to center-periphery relations and the logic of state building.

of religious students in 1994 who, calling themselves the Taliban, aimed to end lawlessness and warlordism and establish a fundamentalist government.[13] When the U.S. invaded in 2001 and overthrew the Taliban regime, it was in southern Afghanistan where the Taliban regrouped as an insurgency, and it is there that the movement remains the strongest to this day.

It would seem, at first blush, that this historical legacy provided a system of meanings to local actors (e.g., Norton 2014)—because southern Afghanistan is the Taliban's cultural and political home, it is a hotbed of insurgency. Yet peering into the granular structure of southern Afghanistan reveals stark differences in the trajectories of local communities with respect to political violence.[14] For example, the desert district of Maiwand, which was the one-time home of Mullah Omar and other senior Taliban leaders, is a center of anti-state and anti-U.S. resistance. Since 2004, the district has been almost entirely under insurgent control. Yet not far away lies Deh Rawud, a district similar in size, demography, and pre-2001 history. This area too was a one-time home to Mullah Omar and many other top leaders, and like Maiwand it too was a Taliban stronghold during the 1990s. But today, the Taliban has little presence there; in fact, the government has firmer control of Deh Rawud than almost any other district in southern Afghanistan (Johnson, 2012). How can two districts that are so similar in cultural, historical, and demographic background be so different in levels of anti-state and anti-American resistance?

Theoretical background

[13] The Taliban declared a state, the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," in 1996. While it achieved *de facto* legitimacy in parts of the country, it failed to achieve *de jure* legitimacy in the international state system. Throughout the late 1990s, the Taliban government waged a war against northern insurgents, called the "Northern Alliance," a campaign in which the Taliban committed atrocities against civilian populations. But it was the Taliban's refusal to extradite Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, following the September 11th attacks that prompted the United States to invade and overthrow the Taliban state.

[14] In this paper, I use the term "community" to describe the segmentary networks that bind individuals together at the local level, including tribe, village or place of residence (propinquity) and shared affiliations with fighting units (so-called *andiwaal* ties). Depending on context, then, community can refer to anything from village to the local branch of a tribe to the district of residence.

Puzzles, of course, are cases that existing theory fails to explain. The mystery here alludes to a larger one in the sub-national variation of political violence. Recent work on the micro-foundations of such violence has called attention to the benefits disaggregating civil war: internal conflict rarely breaks out across a country; instead, most civil wars feature considerable variation in the degree of government- and rebel-control across territories (Kalyvas 2006, 2008; Viterna 2006; Cederman and Gleditsch, 2009; Hegre et al. 2009). Across Afghanistan, the Taliban insurgency appears to be deeply rooted in some areas and nearly non-existent in others. Areas like Maiwand became prominent sites of anti-American and anti-state resistance as early as 2005; recent work shows that these communities welcomed the Taliban, at least initially (Coghlan 2012; van Bijlert 2012; Malkasian 2013; Martin 2014; Gopal 2014). Why do certain communities rebel while others do not?

Three broad theoretical trends attempt to answer this question. The oldest tradition identifies rebellion with grievances, such as poverty, ethnic oppression, or feelings of deprivation (Gurr, 1971); in sociology, this trend emphasizes cultural frames, meaning, and legitimacy in the production of political violence (e.g., MacHardy 1992). Wimmer and colleagues put forth an account of ethnicity which suggests that shifts in legitimacy (such as that accompanying the transition from feudal or indirect rule to the nation state) produce new social categories which can, under the right conditions, become politicized and lay the seeds for violence (Wimmer 2002; Wimmer and Min 2006). Rebellion is more probable when the "like over like" principle—that rulers and ruled should be of the same ethnolinguistic stock—is violated. While this approach is rich with insight into the politicization of ethnicity and the question of when civil wars might break out (e.g., Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010), in Afghanistan it fails to explain either the conflict in general or the particular patterns of violence countrywide. In Maiwand and Deh Rawud, for example, the local state administration, the insurgency, and the population are almost entirely Pashtun.

In political science, the rise of cross-national data sets inspired a research program using econometric methods to study risk factors of civil war. These accounts tended to shift explanations away from grievance

towards opportunity—individuals rebel when it is possible, and profitable, to do so (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). These opportunities include the availability of mountainous terrain, potential income or other selective incentives associated with rebel participation, or weak bureaucratic structures that impede a state's ability to suppress dissent. While these factors may play a role in rebellion, as I discuss below they do not appreciably differ between the two districts under study.

Recent work seeks to move beyond the greed-grievance dichotomy by asserting that both factors are at play (Ballentine and Sherman, 2003; Berdal 2005; Collier and Hoeffler 2009; Young 2016). But the nature of their interaction, and whether they are even analytically separable phenomena, is an open question. This article shows that local resistance to the Afghan state stemmed not from ethnic grievances or rebel opportunity alone, but from the way in which local elites (tribal elders, village chiefs, and local commanders) were either incorporated into or excluded from state (and foreign) patronage. The chains of interaction linking the state and local citizens—through the distribution of titles, offices, and contracts—simultaneously produced grievances among the excluded and opportunities to rebel as a result of state weakness. (In fact, most accounts of patronage tend to take state strength as an *a priori* given, despite that the very act of clientelistic inclusion or exclusion helps produce state weakness[15]). Incorporated village-based elites were able to redistribute both material resources and the strategic resources of security—that is, protection from state or foreign predation—to their clients, ordinary villagers. With such "differential incorporation," those elites excluded from patronage were no longer able to broker these services to their clients, rendering ordinary villagers vulnerable to economic and physical insecurity. Under these conditions, such villagers welcomed armed rebels into their midst, and in some cases, joined outright.

There is a rich tradition in historical sociology of studying civil war in the context of elite incorporation

[15] Strictly speaking, clientelism was a historical mode of state rule in Afghanistan. After the U.S. invasion of 2001, the Afghan political space was effectively (and momentarily) a blank slate, meaning that the space opened for institutional politics to take root. But due to international pressures and incentives clientelism reemerged as the primary form of state building. (Martin 2014; Gopal 2014)

and state formation (Tilly 1975, 1985, 1992; Skocpol 1979; Bright and Harding 1984). In this approach, state-led warfare in early modern Europe required extraction of taxes and conscripts from the population, which spurred organizational development and political centralization. Insurgency and rebellion—in the form of anti-tax revolts and civil wars—were a response of the periphery to extraction by the center, and this resistance often took the form of cross-class alliances (Brustein 1985; Brustein and Levi 1987). The resulting dialectic of cooptation, coercion, and resistance produced the institutional richness of modern European states. But examples of center-led extraction producing resistance are rare today, in part because of international norms and the starkly unequal distribution of coercive power globally lessen have made direct interstate war less likely (Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Centeno 2003). Moreover, the ready availability of rentier revenue (oil, diamonds, foreign aid), and international credit markets has obviated the need of many developing states to organizationally penetrate their peripheries or raise revenue through taxation—the case for post-2001 Afghanistan, which relies almost entirely on rents in the form of foreign aid (Moore 2004; Martin et al. 2009; Verkoren and Kamphuis 2013).[16]

Research on elite incorporation has emphasized exclusion or inclusion among elite themselves (Bayart 1989; Reno 1999; Lindemann 2008; Lindemann 2010), but has left unexplored the key question of how this affects mobilization at the non-elite level. Here, I redirect the focus to the networks of patronage linking elites' clients to the central state, placing the analytical gaze squarely on the interaction between state and society at the local level in explaining political violence. In doing so, I build on research in the structuralist tradition, which shifts the emphasis away from attributes to relations: an individual's embeddedness in networks of kinship and patronage, how these networks cleave or rearrange, and their influence on political exclusion. Bearman (1993), for example, describes how locally-based elite kinship networks of 16th century England transformed into networks of patronage linking peripheral elites to the central state, which helped refashion a particularistic elite ideology into one based on abstract, universalist terms like religion. This

[16] Indeed, as Reno (1999) has shown, the very process of elite incorporation has become subverted by virtue of the state's embeddedness in international markets.

laid the groundwork for the conceptual categories that framed the English civil war. Padgett and Ansell (1993) detail how the Medici family took advantage of their ambiguous structural position in the elite networks of 15th century Florence to capture political control and foster state centralization. Gould (1996) explains the differing patterns of elite participation in Pennsylvania's Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 as a function of prior ties between center and periphery.

Almost all of these works focus on the early-modern period in the United States and Europe. The strategies of state building, in terms of the role of patronage and the pattern of elite incorporation, has received little attention in studies of modern-day civil war.[17] In particular, the role of patron-client relations in promoting the risk of civil war in newly forming states has never before been studied in the modern context—when international prerogatives interact with local social structure.[18] In Afghanistan today, patterns of local violence are the result of the way in which state makers included some elites in networks of patronage and violently excluded others. But if state builders make their own states, they do not do so under conditions of their choosing. On the one hand, they are confronted by already existing social structures: in this case, a network of peripheral elites who are connected in various ways to each other and to their clients. On the other, they operate under the economic prerogatives and symbolic categories of the international state system, which their predecessors in 16th century Europe did not have to contend with. In Afghanistan, this includes the strategic rents provided by the United States as part of its "war on terror," which profoundly influenced the Afghan state's strategies of elite incorporation.

[17] A number of studies implicitly link patronage to civil war by emphasizing state capacity; in accounts focusing on ethnic legitimacy, for example, clientelism emerges as a method for distributing resources and common goods when the state is too weak to distribute equitably (Wimmer 2002; Thies 2010; Besley and Persson 2010). This view, however, misses the endogeneity in clientelism and state weakness. Importantly, it also ignores the international context under which modern-day state formation takes place, which includes the influence of global markets, rents, and colonialism (with a prominent exception being Reno 1999). In post-2001 Afghanistan, clientelism is not merely an unfortunate side effect of a weak state and weak civil society, but a form of state building that emerged in response to international norms and incentives, which include exogenous rents, the international military presence, and international *de jure* norms of statehood.

[18] While the modern state formation and civil war literatures are largely distinct, attempts to link the two subjects usually focus on state capacity (Thies 2010; Besley and Persson 2010) or natural resources (Ross 1999; 2006). Fearon and Laitin (2003) include new state formation as a variable in their cross-country model, but the causal mechanism is unspecified.

A Roadmap

The strategy of this article is to describe this process in Afghanistan through the analysis of elite networks in the districts of Deh Rawud and Maiwand immediately following the 2001 U.S. invasion. I begin by considering the prevailing explanations for violence in Afghanistan and show that they fail to account for the observed outcome in the two local regions of interest. Then I formulate a linked pair of alternative hypotheses: (1) Elites from these two districts were differentially incorporated into state patronage: a far greater proportion of elites in Deh Rawud were awarded official positions when compared to Maiwand. (2) The differential incorporation was the result of differences in the ways in which elites were tied to each other in a network of affiliations.

I then describe the process of collecting the data required to test these hypotheses. By necessity, such data should be granular, relational and, importantly, allow us to understand the chains of relations extending beyond individuals in cascades of patronage. I describe the data collection strategies and analytical models, some novel, required for capturing the structure of patron-client networks and differential incorporation.

After establishing that this data structure indeed shows that elites in Deh Rawud were more thoroughly incorporated into state patronage, the article then examines *why* these elites should be have been so favored. I describe how the United States military presence incentivized Afghan state builders to capture and kill some elites in the name of the war on terror. This occurred because of the "identification problem"— an outside force like the U.S. or the central state was unable to tell friend from foe on the local level—allowing local elites to "maliciously denounce" competing elites and secure patronage posts. Importantly, the criteria with which the U.S. targeted local elites was uniform countrywide, meaning that underlying variation in the topology of elite networks accounted for the differential incorporation. Malicious denunciation, in other words, describes the logic of Afghan state building—an example of how modern state formation is

subordinated to the exogenous influence of the international state system. The effect of malicious denunciation, however, was entirely a function of local social structure: In Deh Rawud, where elites were connected to each other through a dense network of linkages, the killing of certain individuals had little effect, but in Maiwand, where a small number of elites held dominant positions in the network, the targeting reverberated across the network. An analysis of affiliation and similarity shows that this targeting had the effect of excluding a large proportion of Maiwand elites from state patronage, thereby rendering thousands of their clients without the benefit of patronage or protection from state and foreign violence. They turned to armed rebellion, which was interpreted using the locally prevailing repertoire of social critique as "jihad." They became the social base of the Taliban insurgency.

The Failure of Alternative Explanations

The American invasion of 2001 toppled the Taliban state and laid the basis for the construction of a new state, staffed by American-backed elite. In the initial post-invasion years, Afghanistan was at peace and there was little public sympathy or nostalgia for the ousted Taliban regime. But by 2005 the Taliban reemerged as an insurgency, this time enjoying popular support in certain communities, and declared their aim of expelling the American military, overthrowing the Afghan state, and reestablishing their 1990s rule (Martin 2014; Giustozzi 2012). In just four years, the country had gone from peace to insurgency.[19]

Because Afghanistan sits at the intersection of interstate conflict, internal civil war, terrorism, and state building, a variety of analytical approaches and research traditions have suggested hypotheses (not necessarily mutually exclusive) for the causes of the resurgence of political violence. One tradition in international relations and military studies, particularly within the counterinsurgency paradigm, offers an

[19] NATO (the Dutch for Deh Rawud, the Canadians for Maiwand) deployed in 2006, two years after the onset of the insurgency. Exploring the reasons for the insurgency's initial mobilizations, therefore, focus specifically on the role of U.S. forces.

Table 1- Districts Are Similar With Respect to Aid and Demographics

	Deh Rawud (non-resistant)	Maiwand (resistant)
Per family income	105	100
Aid per capita	30	33
Civilian Casualties	138	7
Population Density	30	19
Number of villages	85	156
Mountainous Villages	30.6	4.5
Poppy Cultivation	1311	721.5
Percent Pashtun	100	88

Units: Per family income and aid per capita, U.S. dollars per month; Population density, persons per square kilometer; Mountainous Villages; percent of villages in mountainous or semi-mountainous terrain; poppy cultivation, hectares. Civilian casualties figures are for 2002. Sources: "Urozgan: A Socio-economic and Demographic Profile," Afghanistan Central Statistics Office; The United Nations Population Fund, 2004; Kandahar: A Socio-economic and Demographic Profile," Afghanistan Central Statistics Office and The United Nations Population Fund, 2005; "Afghanistan—Opium Survey 2005," The United Nations Office of Drug Control, 2005. Population data is from the TLO (2009; 2012), civilian casualties data from field interviews.

instrumental explanation for the rise of conflict: the lack of aid and economic opportunity helps create and feed insurgency (e.g., Fearon 2008). The comparison in Table 1 shows, however, that Deh Rawud and Maiwand are nearly identical in per family income and aid per capita.[20] A related approach is to identify the Taliban resurgence as, in part, a reprisal for civilian casualties from airstrikes and other U.S. actions (Condra et al, 2010). But during the years 2001-2004, the formative period for the current insurgency, U.S. forces killed or wounded nearly 15 times the number of civilians in Deh Rawud as in Maiwand, including a high-profile airstrike on a wedding party that killed 48 civilians and received national attention.

A distinct approach is the influential work of Fearon and Laitin (2003), who argue against grievance- and ethnicity-based accounts in favor of "opportunity" models: Insurgencies arise when the political and military opportunities exist for them to do so. The four most important opportunities are: state weakness

[20] In what follows, the comparative analysis and descriptive statistics is restricted to the 2001-2005 period, which was the formative period for the insurgency. As I describe in the next section, the insurgency was either weak or non-existent for much of the 2001-2004 period, and so the assumption is that the post-2005 insurgency has roots in the years prior. Strictly speaking, there may be a distinction between the initial causes and sustaining causes of civil war (see, for example, Kalyvas, 2006). However, for our purposes, the object of interest is the Taliban's initial mobilization into an insurgency. Numerous authors have described the path dependent process of armed anti-state mobilization (cf., Aydin and Emrence, 2015)

(when the center lacks the ability to penetrate and control the hinterlands); a rural, rugged terrain (which allows for redoubts from which rebels and bandits can organize a rebellion); a large population; and ready access to foreign aid and arms. In Table 1, however, we can observe that Deh Rawud is both more densely populated and occupies a more rugged terrain than Maiwand. Nearly a third of Deh Rawud villages are situated in semi-mountainous or mountainous territory, while Maiwand is almost entirely flat. On average, Maiwand villages lie closer to the district capital, and Maiwand lies only 40 miles from Kandahar, the country's second largest city. One particularly potent form of opportunity is the drug trade; however, opium cultivation per hectare is nearly double in Deh Rawud compared to Maiwand. If military and criminal opportunity is the key predictor for political violence, then Deh Rawud, not Maiwand, should be an insurgent hotbed.[21]

These metrics fare just as poorly nationwide. In a study of three insecure and two secure Afghan provinces, Fishstein and Wilder (2012) show that there is little evidence that aid reduces violence or diminishes support for insurgency. Berman et al. (2011) demonstrate that in Afghanistan there is no positive correlation between employment rates and insurgent attacks. In terms of the opportunity thesis, the rugged central highlands of the Hazarajat—among the most remote parts of the country—are the most peaceful and government friendly.

As described above, a number of authors have recently argued for the ethno-national roots of modern conflict (e.g., Wimmer 2013). On Afghanistan, some scholars have put forward the ethnic hypothesis to

[21] Some scholars point to the presence of natural resources as a driver of internal conflict (Ross 2004). Neither district in question, however, has significant mineral deposits. Furthermore, countrywide there does not appear to be the relationship between mineral deposits and violence seen in some African countries, because Afghan deposits have largely been unexploited. Another possible difference is the presence of military bases. The U.S. built a military base in 2002 in Deh Rawud (following an errant air strike). But I incorporate the presence of this base in the data as a source of foreign patronage. In particular, the base allowed certain local elites to obtain lucrative contracts for base perimeter security. These patronage opportunities were lacking in Maiwand, which did not have a base. The other possible effect of a base is the ability to make more frequent patrols. However, the proximity of the major U.S. base near Kandahar city meant that there were frequent patrols in Maiwand in 2002 as well. Moreover, Khas Uruzgan district also received a U.S. base but did not distribute contracts to locals as in Deh Rawud (Gopal 2014). Khas Uruzgan's subsequent outcome was very similar to Maiwand's, suggesting that the role of patronage was far more important than the role of patrolling.

explain the waves of state collapse and insurgency over the past three decades and the larger process of Afghan state-making over the centuries. Barfield (2010) proposes that the political foundations of the Afghan state lay in the dichotomy of the Persian "men of the pen" who staffed state administration and Pashtun "men of the sword" who directed state coercion. Kamel (2015) identifies the Taliban insurgency as a force of Pashtun nationalism, articulating the long-standing symbols and motifs of the Pashtun ethnicity.

On its face, the ethnic hypothesis appears plausible: 91% of the Taliban's national leadership is Pashtun, whereas Pashtuns only comprise 42% of the population and 38% of the Afghan government's cabinet.[22] However, a closer examination of district-level data tells a different story. In Maiwand and Deh Rawud the

insurgent Taliban leadership in entirely Pashtun—and so is the local government. The population in Deh Rawud consists only of Pashtuns, whereas Maiwand contains a sizable Baluch minority. Not a single Baluchi has held a local government position since 2001, and yet Baluchis suffer a similar disadvantage within the local Taliban hierarchy, where they lack representation in the insurgent "shadow government."[23] These trends are similar across Pashtun-majority districts—in all cases, the insurgency and the government are from the same ethnic group.[24]

This points to a seeming paradox: nationally and locally, the Taliban are overwhelmingly Pashtun, and yet Pashtuns do not appear to be, as a group, excluded from state representation. While pockets of Pashtun nationalism do exist, particularly in urban centers like Kabul and across the border in Pakistan, in the

[22] "Taliban national leadership" refers to the Taliban government at the ministerial level as of September 2001, the data of which is from Strick van Linschoten, Kuehn, Gopal (2015). "Afghan government cabinet" refers to 2004 Afghan cabinet, of which data is widely available. Population data is from the TLO (2009; 2012) and the Library of Congress Country Studies – Afghanistan.

[23] For the districts, "Taliban leadership" refers to the 5-7 highest ranking individuals in the district, including "shadow" governor, police chief, and judges. "Local government" refers to the District Shura, District Governor, and District Police Chief. The source for this data is from Gopal (2013), TLO (2009; 2012), and field interviews.

[24] This echoes the findings of Fotini Christia (2012), who showed that alliances made during the mid-1990s civil war were not reducible to ethnicity.

majority of rural Afghanistan the Pashtun ethnicity has not become politicized (Schetter 2005). As we will see below, the solution to this conundrum lies in the ways in which identity interacts with networks of patronage and exclusion.

A correlated view to the ethnicity hypothesis is the argument that tribal favoritism promotes violence. In the Afghan and Pakistani context, a tribe is an imagined community of patrilineal descent (Barth 1965; J. Anderson 1975). The Pashtun ethnic group is comprised of hundreds of tribes and sub-tribes. Importantly, however, tribal membership functions very differently from ethnicity; there is no identification with a "nation" as such, nor do individuals in a tribal group circumscribe their existence in a totality that transcends them. Unlike membership in the Pashtun ethnicity—which implies notions of common identity and traits unique to the group (Rhezak 2011)—individuals in a tribe rarely ascribe essential characteristics of membership. The difference between being a member of the Noorzai and Ishaqzai tribes, to take the two largest examples in Maiwand, has little to do with essentialized differences and is instead a function of embeddedness in networks of solidarity. In this sense, tribe is closer to a fictive kinship network than to an ethno-nationalist grouping (Jabbar and Dawod, 2003).[25]

Despite this segmentary nature, a number of scholars and analysts have argued that systematic patterns of tribal exclusion and tribal chauvinism, like ethnic exclusion and favoritism, have produced the conditions for internecine violence. Johnson and Mason (2008) have proposed that the Taliban insurgency is in part an articulation of the long-marginalized Ghilzai tribal confederation, and Rashid (2002) makes a similar claim about the Taliban government of the 1990s.[26] Table 2, however, suggests that tribal exclusion by itself cannot explain the difference in outcomes between Deh Rawud and Maiwand. In both, local governance structures—in this case, the district shura, a body comprised of local elites who act as brokers

[25] However, tribal solidarity extends beyond kinship because it extends to strangers. For this reason, scholars describe tribe as a subset of a more general type of solidarity mechanism known as a *qawm* (Coburn 2011)

[26] Forthcoming research shows, however, that the tribal composition of the Taliban leadership nationally does not in fact skew towards the Ghilzai confederation (Gopal, forthcoming). See also Ruttig (2012)

Table 2 - District Shura Tribal Distribution

	Deh Rawud		Maiwand		
	Population	Representation	Representation	Population	
Noorzai	40	0.925	1.031	35	Noorzai
Babozai	37	0.833	0.771	35	Ishaqzai
Popalzai	15	0.750	1.167	12	Khogyani
Other	15	1.200	1.278	18	Other

Note: Population figures are percentages, and representation is the percentage of seats for the tribe in question on the district shura relative to percentage in population. Tribes with representation greater than one are overrepresented, and those less than one are underrepresented. All data from TLO (2012) and TLO (2009).

between constituent communities and the state (and foreign donors), closely resembles the population distribution for the three largest tribes in each district. In both districts, minority tribes are collectively overrepresented in the council, while the majority tribes are either slightly underrepresented or actually overrepresented as well. In Deh Rawud, the Popalzai tribe is the most underrepresented, but there are few Popalzai Taliban commanders in the district (TLO 2012). In Maiwand, the Noorzai tribe is overrepresented, but Noorzais comprise a sizable part of the Taliban structure in the district. And while the Noorzai tribe enjoys similar levels of representation in both districts, their involvement with the insurgency differs appreciably (TLO 2012, 2009).

While tribe by itself is not an adequate explanation for the violence, the story changes when viewed within the broader universe of network relations. The key mechanism is malicious denunciation. The data in the following sections will show that tribal links do matter for exclusion and violence, but they are only one mode among multiple forms of solidarity that comprise networks of patronage.

Background in Light of Theory: Malicious Denunciation

A major shortcoming of most of these accounts is that they minimize the foreign role in Afghan state formation and under-emphasize the interaction between foreign prerogatives and latent Afghan social structure. This section will review in more detail the background to the post-2001 conflict with respect to the role of elite targeting and clientelism.

In just two months in late 2001, the United States invaded and succeeded in overthrowing the Taliban-run state that had ruled Afghanistan for the previous five years. The principal targets of this invasion, the leadership of al Qaeda, managed to flee to neighboring countries. But the Taliban movement, which numbered in the tens of thousands, remained in Afghanistan. In the early days of the new American-backed administration headed by Hamid Karzai, Taliban members and fellow travelers—from leadership to rank and file—surrendered their weapons, disavowed political activity, and returned to their homes (Martin 2014). Many of them, including top leaders, pledged allegiance to the new Afghan state (Gopal 2013). In doing so, they were drawing from an established repertoire of social action borne of the exigencies of two decades of conflict: following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, many Afghan communists switched sides and joined the Islamist *mujahedeen* (Martin 2014; Rubin, 2002). Similarly, in 1994 many *mujahedeen* warlords surrendered and switched sides to the newly emerged Taliban movement (Maley, 1998; Martin 2014).[27] Recent work suggests that such side-switching is not unique to Afghanistan, but may be a general feature of internal conflict; Christia (2012), for example, demonstrates that in multiparty civil wars, groups align and factionalize based on the distribution of power between them, not as a function of identity or ideology.

As a consequence of the Taliban surrender and demobilization in 2001, there was hardly any anti-state and anti-American violence in southern Afghanistan during 2002 and 2003 (Gopal 2014). Nonetheless, U.S. troops stationed on Afghan soil continued to pursue the prerogatives of the "war on terror," which assumed

[27] Many of these warlords had received patronage from the CIA and other intelligence agencies in the 1980s, but when funding ceased following the end of the cold war, they turned their guns on each other. With the rise of the Taliban, some warlords fled and others joined the new movement as a way to protect their social position and sometimes, their lives.

the presence of hostile forces in the Afghan countryside. In doing so, they relied on local informants, almost always provincial- and district-level elites, for intelligence (van Biljert 2012; Martin 2014). Kalyvas (2006) describes how "malicious denunciation," in which individuals settle private scores by informing on each other (either falsely or accurately) to armed forces, helps propel the logic of civil war. Although Afghanistan was at peace in 2002, the presence of U.S. forces, who offered large sums of money and other inducements (including reconstruction contracts and land leases) for actionable intelligence, incentivized local elites to inform on rival elites. The American presence therefore created a class of rentiers who took advantage of the "identification problem," to use Kalyvas' term, in which outside forces are unable on their own to distinguish civilian from insurgent. In effect, these local elite informers did the work of rendering the Afghan countryside (partially) legible to foreign forces.

Elite informers were incorporated into the Afghan state through patronage; typically, these informers occupied governorships and police departments in key provinces. Through malicious denunciation, they violently excluded rival elites from state patronage—particularly those who fit most closely with the American war on terror's insurgent archetype, irrespective of their actual political allegiance or whether there had been any previously existing rivalry between informer and target (van Biljert 2012; Gopal 2014). The targeted elites were either killed outright or driven from the district.

Normally, in the clientelistic system of rural Afghanistan, villagers depend on local notables with whom they are tied though kinship, tribe, or place of residence, to petition for state services (Barth 1965; Anderson 1978; Favre 2005; Coburn 2011). These could be development aid or other economic goods, but more importantly they include access to legal institutions (including the ability to adjudicate disputes and secure a fair hearing, obtain official documents, and so on) and protection from the (seemingly) arbitrary violence of the state and foreign forces. Malicious denunciation therefore had the effect of removing these brokers and socially dislocating entire swathes of villages.

Malicious Denunciation in Deh Rawud and Maiwand

In late 2001 and early 2002, shortly after the Taliban government formally surrendered, local tribal elders and commanders gathered in Deh Rawud and Maiwand districts (and districts across southern Afghanistan) to address the power vacuum produced by the collapse of the *ancien régime*. The figures fell into three groups: those who had been allied to the Taliban government, those who had been neutral, and those who had been in opposition and had just returned to the country. Together, they constituted the district-level elite. In December 2001 in Maiwand, and January 2002 in Deh Rawud, these local elites created a *shuras*, councils of notables, to run the affairs of the district.

Meanwhile the U.S. Special Operations Forces began operations in both districts in pursuit of former Taliban, which required hiring local elites to provide private militias and provide "intelligence." This inaugurated a cycle of malicious denunciation. In May 2002, a key Maiwand elite named Hajji Burget Khan was killed in a special forces night raid. The next month, the U.S., acting on false intelligence, dropped bombs on a wedding party in Deh Rawud, killing over 100 civilians. The following month, repeated U.S. raids forced another key Maiwand elite, Hajji Bashar, to flee the country.

This process continued so that by 2003, key elites had been killed or driven from each district. While this unfolded, the Afghan state sought to expand its control into the countryside. It dismantled the self-elected councils in each district in favor of government-sanctioned councils. It awarded some elites with posts on the new councils, or appointed them to official positions such as district governor and police chief. Other elites—particularly those linked to elites targeted by the U.S.—were excluded.

Crucially, the logic of malicious denunciation, state expansion, and foreign targeting were present in both districts, but the outcomes differed greatly. By 2005, insurgency was raging in Maiwand, whereas Deh

Rawud remained at peace. The data presented in the next sections offers insight into why this came to be.

Data and Methods

From the above discussion, we can see that a key reason why data in Table 1 do not support the prevailing theories of conflict is because they account for neither the role of malicious denunciation nor the structure of social ties in the districts. In other words, by ignoring both the local social structure and the exogenous influence of foreign actors, these theories unwittingly attempt to graft *a priori* categories of identity, ethnicity, and military opportunity onto a complex, fragmented, and contingent process of alliance formation and score settling. Constructing an alternative theory requires producing an accurate picture of the local social structure and the ways in which this interacts with state and foreign imperatives. The clientelistic system described above suggests that the local elite is a useful unit of analysis for providing a window into the relationship between those elites' clients (ordinary villagers) and the central state. As a data structure, this means that we must first define the term "local elite," and then we must devise a reliable method of characterizing the ways in which these elites are connected to each other and to their clients. With this data in hand, we can gauge the effect of elite targeting on the outcomes of the two districts.

Local Positions

With centuries of indirect rule, Afghanistan has developed an intricate system of elites, which allows for the precise identification of local notables. At the lowest level, villages appoint *maleks*, who act as village representatives in dealings with the government. In theory, there is one *malek* for every village, but in reality tribal elders can sometimes act alongside, or in lieu of, a *malek*. A tribal elder functions as a broker between the state and the local section of his tribe; a single tribe may have many tribal leaders, each hailing from

different areas, or it may have only a few—particularly in those cases where the tribal leadership has been absorbed into state administration. Traditionally, *maleks* and tribal elders were the two most significant examples of local elite-level leadership, but the Soviet invasion of 1979 and the C.I.A. patronage of insurgents produced a new category of actor, collectively known as the *mujahedeen*. The most enterprising of these gunmen grew to become warlords, the majority of whom operate to this day.

The scholarly consensus is that these three types of actors—*maleks*, tribal elders, and mujahedeen commanders—comprise the rural elite in southern Afghanistan (Emadi 2005; Noelle 1997; Huffman 1951; Kakar 2005; Rubin 1995, 2002; Goodhand 2000).[28] These categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive; some individuals function in all three roles at once. Every elite belongs to at least one local constituency; the smallest is the village, and then the *wanda*, an informal geographical division based on the size of a tribe or subtribe in the area, and finally the *manteqa*, an informal geographic grouping that divides a district into distinct regions.

To collect the data, I conducted a detailed field survey of both districts, built upon years of contacts in the region. I lived in Afghanistan between 2008 and 2011 and traveled extensively through both districts. This allowed me to build a network of trust among local informants, which I took advantage of to collect data for this study. My aim was to characterize district elite structure in 2001 through the identification of local elites and the collection of detailed attribute data. All interviews were conducted in the local languages of Pashto and Dari. Both districts have eight *manteqas*; I visited each and through interviews produced lists of *maleks*, tribal elders, and mujahedeen commanders associated with each village within the *manteqa*.

[28] Some accounts describe two additional categories, the *alim* (a religious cleric; plural: *ulema*) and the *mirab* (who is in charge of village water channels) but the data sources used here rarely identified them as local notables. In any event, neither type received a patronage post in either district, so this omission does not affect the results. The *malek*-tribal elder-mujahedeen typology is specific to southern Afghanistan; regional variations of *malek* includes *arbab, mir* and other terms. The term *khan*, referring to large landowner, is not used in this study as a denotation of elite status, because it is rare that a *khan* is not also a *malek*, tribal elder, or mujahedeen commander.

In Deh Rawud, I based in the district capital (of the same name), a town of some 5,000, and made nearly two-dozen trips into the largest villages in each *manteqa*. I stayed for up to two or three days in a given village, living in the guest room of a local elite, who acted as my guide and protection during my visit. I typically conducted unstructured interviews with my subjects, collecting both life histories and attribute data. Sometimes, in addition to meeting local elites I also interviewed figures who functioned as independent arbiters; in the Myando *manteqa*, for example (childhood home of Taliban leader Mullah Omar), I interviewed a religious judge and a Sufi preacher who were quite knowledgeable about local history. In all cases, I worked to triangulate attribute information with multiple sources. As an American, I benefited from Deh Rawud's integration into an American-backed state: travel was safe and relatively straightforward.

Maiwand district, however, posed significant challenges. Because of the strong insurgent presence, I was unable to base in Keshk-i-Nakhud, the district center, for more than one or two nights at a time. Fortunately, however, Maiwand's proximity to Kandahar City, which is under Afghan government control, allowed me to make almost daily trips into the district. I always traveled under the protection of a local elite; often, the elite from a particular *manteqa* to which I wished to travel would meet me at the district center and then escort me to his village, or if security did not permit, to a neighboring village. Many of these elites were contacts I had made during previous visits and other field research, which meant that I was able to rely on a network of trust to safely travel the district. I was able to make multiple trips and conduct dozens of interviews in all *manteqas* except two, Band-i-Timor and Garam Ab, where I was only able to visit twice and once, respectively, because of security concerns. Despite this, I was able to conduct more than 40 interviews in Maiwand—about the same as in Deh Rawud.

Crucially, in both districts interviewees were asked both about the current *malek* or tribal elder in their village, and about the elite who represented their village in 2001, following the overthrow of the Taliban. In this way, I compiled two lists, one of elites in 2001 and another in 2014. I also obtained government

rosters of all those occupying official positions between 2002 and 2014. These positions include seats on the district council, the district governorship, and the district police headquarters. The 2001 list was the basis for the baseline networks that I used in my analysis, and the government roster was the basis for the identification of incorporated individuals.[29]

The result of this field work was an initial roster of over 120 elites in Deh Rawud and over 160 in Maiwand. Through these interviews I also recorded attributes for each elite: his tribe, *manteqa*, village of residence, *mujahedeen* affiliation during the 1980s (if any), and Taliban government affiliation in the 1990s (if any). If the individual was a *mujahedeen* commander in the 1980s, I also collected the names and attributes of his sub-commanders.

These methods introduce two possible sources of bias, which I took measures to minimize. The first stems from my reliance on local elites with whom I had a prior relationship, which made it is possible that elites more closely tied to these individuals were overrepresented in my roster. To safeguard against this, I recruited an Afghan researcher to travel to both districts and independently develop an elite roster. This individual, who was working from an entirely different set of initial contacts, conducted nearly 50 interviews on site, and was able to travel more extensively through insurgent-dominated Maiwand than I had managed. I also obtained reports on the two districts compiled by the research organization The Liaison Office (TLO 2009, 2012), which contain information on elites in 2001 and after.

A second potential source of bias lay in the fact that interviewees were asked to name individuals who were elites in 2001, suggesting possible errors in recall. However, in practice I found that individuals rarely had difficulty remembering, and disagreement among different sources was rare. This was because, in most

[29] Strictly speaking, the government rosters only show district-level posts. I combined this data with provincial-level rosters (which are widely available) and information about positions held in foreign paramilitary groups run by the CIA or special forces, which were obtained through interviews.

cases, either there had been no change in the intervening years—the same elites were in place in 2014—or because when elite leadership did change it marked a significant event in the life of the village. Stories of elites who had fled or were killed after 2001 had become part of the oral culture, a local history that my interviewees were already passing down to their children. Still, to further safeguard against error, I was able to obtain United Nations documentation of the informal "elections" held in late 2001 and early 2002, when local elites established *shuras* to administer the districts in the wake of the Taliban collapse. These internal reports were contemporaneous accounts of local elite rosters in 2001, and provided an excellent check for my data.

There was significant overlap between all four lists, and I included only those individuals appearing on at least two lists in the final data set. The result was a final roster of 105 elites in Deh Rawud and 157 in Maiwand.

Attributes into Relations

There is abundant evidence in both the social-network and Afghanistan-focused literatures that two individuals who share attributes—particularly on key demographic, behavioral, and affiliation indices—are likely to share a social tie. McPherson et al. (2001), for example, highlight the principle of homophily—that "contact between similar people occur at a higher rate than non-similar people"—in social networks. In Afghanistan, researchers have long observed that the most likely means through which patronage is transmitted is along a network of solidarity that Afghans call *qawm* (Anderson 1975; Roy 1990, 1994; Glatzer 2002; Tapper 2008; Coburn 2011). Depending on the context, *qawm* can refer to tribe, a common place of origin, a shared membership in a militia or *mujahedeen* group, etc.

On the national level, political networks based on mujahedeen membership is usually the primary means

of patronage distribution, but at the district- and village-level, mujahedeen membership, tribe, and place of origin (or residence) are equally important (Roy 1994, Osman 2008, Azoy 2011). That is, all three are means through which patronage is likely to be distributed, and a client will take advantage of as many shared memberships with a patron as possible to secure resources. Therefore, in building the patronage data structure I included all three forms of solidarity.[30]

The attribute data produced by the field surveys allow us to construct a patronage data structure by making use of the fact that a local elite and a villager who share a key attribute, and therefore belong to the same *qawm*, are highly likely to develop a patron-client relationship. Similarly, two elites who belong to the same *qawm* are highly likely to share a common client base. In this way, even when only a small number of elites attain patronage positions, the consequences may be felt widely across the district—and likewise, when certain elites are targeted, clients who are indirectly linked may feel the effects. Shared *horizontal* affiliations of elites, in other words, are just important as the vertical links between patrons and clients. To capture this horizontal network of affiliations, I transformed the 2-mode attributional data into a 1-mode actor network, using standard network procedures (Allen 1974; Borgatti and Everett, 1977).

Affiliation Centrality

The attribute data and the 1-mode elite affiliation networks of Deh Rawud and Maiwand allow for the testing of two hypotheses:

[30] Because tribal membership overwhelms district-level social ties (there are far more individuals belonging to the same tribe than to the same mujahedeen group or place of origin), it is possible that tribe is not as effective a means of district-level patronage distribution as other *qawm*. Despite research indicating otherwise (e.g., TLO 2009), to guard against possible error I normalized tribe—but the key findings remained the same when tribe is un-normalized.

(1) Deh Rawud and Maiwand were sites of differential elite incorporation. A significantly larger proportion of Deh Rawud elites were incorporated into state patronage networks.

(2) The differential incorporation is the result of differences in elite-network topologies between the two districts. Specifically, the targeting of elite *i* will be more likely to limit elite *j*'s ability to become incorporated when *j* is more tightly bound to *i* (that is, has fewer alternative relationships to other elites) in the network of affiliations.

Testing hypothesis (1) requires a consistent measure of incorporation. There are two ways in which elites can become incorporated into state patronage and thereby act as brokers to their constituents: gaining a government post or obtaining a role in a foreign militia. Both positions allow the elite to secure goods and resources for his community while protecting them against state and foreign violence. The type of government appointments available to local elites include: a seat on the district shura (a body of government-sanctioned tribal leaders and *maleks* who meet to discuss issues of local interest, petition the state for services, oversee state-sponsored development projects, adjudicate local disputes, and distribute aid); a position in the district administration (which includes posts such as the district governor, chief of police, and attorney general's office); and an office in provincial government (which includes posts such as the provincial council, a body that advises and liaises with the provincial governor). Foreign militias, the other source of patronage, refers to the irregular armed bodies created by the U.S. military and C.I.A. to support their counterterrorism operations. These militias recruit from the local population and are used to guard the perimeter of American bases or to accompany U.S. forces on missions.[31]

[31] In what follows, for sake of simplicity I denote membership in either local government or a foreign militia as the holding of a "government office." When foreign militia and government posts are considered separately, the findings remain the same.

While hypothesis (1) links differential incorporation to variations in anti-state violence, (2) suggests an underlying reason for why incorporation varies across districts. Simply put, it asserts that the outcome of a targeting strategy is contingent on the topography of elite affiliations in a given district. There is a rich and varied literature on characterizing network topologies and the effects of node removal (e.g., Newman and Girvan 2004); however, these methods fail to capture the notion of being "tightly bound" in (2), because the networks under study here are valued and multilevel. For example, Borgatti (2006) describes a general approach for pinpointing the key nodes in a network. He identifies two classes of importance: nodes that are centrally significant in the overall cohesiveness of the network, and nodes that are centrally important by virtue of the extent to which they are embedded in the surrounding network. The first indicates the effect of node removal on overall network topology, while the second indicates the extent to which the node is an important player in the diffusion of goods and ideas. Neither approach quite captures the networks in this study, however. The networks depicted here represent horizontal ties between elites; yet at the same time, as a multilevel network, each node also represents an elite who sits within an un-pictured vertical network of (potential) patronage, from state and foreign patrons to his clients in the village. It is not relevant for our purposes to examine the diffusion of goods or ideas within the horizontal network. Rather, we are interested in the extent to which shared horizontal affiliations prevent or enable elites to form vertical ties to patrons. The standard analytics of centrality and cohesion, including measures such as betweenness and cut point identification, and therefore not appropriate for our purposes.

Instead, I follow Friedkin (1991), who advocates a problem-specific approach to centrality measures. The question posed by (2) is: did the targeting of specific elites adversely affect the ability of affiliated elites to form patronage ties to the state and its foreign backers? We can probe this by developing a centrality measure for affiliation and testing if it predicts whether an individual received a government office or was excluded. Let $\boldsymbol{A}$ be the n x m affiliation matrix of actors and groups (village, tribe, and so forth), so that $\boldsymbol{C} = \boldsymbol{A}\boldsymbol{A}^{\dagger}$ is the n x n co-affiliation matrix of actors. We define an *affiliation score* a_{ij} for actor i with actor

j such that

$$a_{ij} = \frac{c_{ij}}{c_{ii}}$$

where c_{ij} is the number of groups in which *i* is jointly a member with *j*, and c_{ii} is the total number of groups that *i* is a member of, which is simply the degree centrality of *i*. The affiliation score has the property of ranging from 0 to 1; when *i* and *j* do not share any affiliations, a_{ij} is 0, and when all groups that *i* is a member of, *j* is also a member, the score is 1. To take an example, suppose *i* and *j* are jointly a member of two groups, and that these are the only groups that *i* is involved in. And further suppose that *k* and *j* are also jointly a member of two groups, but *k* is also a member of two other groups that do not include *j*. Then $a_{ij} = 1$ and $a_{kj} = 0.5$, and we say that *i* is more closely affiliated with *j* than is *k*.

It is clear that

$$I_{ij} = 1 - a_{ij}$$

is a measure of the independence of actor *i* from *j*. From these definitions, we can define and interpret the *affiliation centrality* $A(i)$ for node *i*:

$$A(i) = \sum_{j}^{n} a_{ij}$$

which is a real-valued number between 1 and *n*. The affiliation centrality can be thought of as coarse-grained measure of the number of individuals fully enmeshed in the network of *i*, such that they share no affiliations with any other actor. When normed, it describes the percentage of

the network that is fully encapsulated within the affiliations of actor i.[32]

In what follows, the strategy will be first to establish that elites in the two districts were differentially incorporated, and then to use affiliation centrality to predict which elites were excluded and explain the pattern of incorporation.

Patronage and Exclusion

Table 3 presents a summary of the data. With respect to the first hypothesis, strikingly, close to 54 percent of Deh Rawud elites would hold a government office in the years after 2001, whereas only 24 percent did so in Maiwand. Correspondingly, the percentage of the population represented by a broker in government was more than double in Deh Rawud as compared to Maiwand. Fourteen Deh Rawud elites went on to assume positions in provincial-level government, including important posts such as the chief of police of Uruzgan province (where Deh Rawud is located) or managed to secure lucrative positions with U.S.-funded militias. Only one of Maiwand's 157 elites landed a position in Kandahar's provincial council, and only two were drawn into U.S.-backed militias. This imbalance resulted in an uneven distribution of resources and goods within the districts, but more importantly, it meant that the number of people exposed to state predation and foreign violence was far greater in Maiwand. One elder from Maiwand recalled that:

> In the beginning after the Americans came there was security, but very quickly it became dangerous for us…[The forces of] Gul Agha Sherzai [Kandahar's governor] would come and harass people, asking them to give weapons or money. They would give the Americans wrong information and the soldiers would come, break into our homes during the night and arrest people. They did this in front of the women and they had no regard for our culture. Too many innocent people in those days were killed or taken to jail. If you did not have someone powerful in the government to protect you, nothing could be done.

[32] There may not, of course, be any individual who is solely affiliated with *j* (meaning, the term $a_{ij} = 1$ need not be true for any pair of nodes), which is why this centrality gives a coarse-grained, average sense of an individual's affiliation-based influence.

Table 3 - Data Summary: Differential Incorporation

		Deh Rawud	Maiwand
	Elites	106	157
	Population per elite	387	525
Percentage of Elites Holding Office	At district-level	40.6	22.3
	At province-level	6.6	0.6
	With foreign forces	6.6	1.3
	Total	**53.8**	**24.2**

Note: Population data from TLO (2009, 2010). All data is for offices held from 2002 onwards.

Elites were violently excluded on the basis of malicious denunciation of rival elites. In Maiwand and Deh Rawud, state officials working with U.S. forces identified local elites to target (in both cases these informants were from outside the district). A commander who worked with Kandahar governor Gul Agha Sherzai, one of the key official informants, explained

> We knew who were the big commanders in every district, who were the big Taliban and al Qaeda supporters… there were Taliban supporters who had many weapons, many fighters, and we tried to catch them.

In practice, certain factors increased the likelihood of being labeled a "Taliban commander:" enjoying military stature (especially by leading the local branch of one of the seven mujahedeen parties during the 1980s and 1990s); membership in the ousted Taliban regime (even if that membership had since been repudiated); and the lack of preexisting ties, through kinship or patronage, with officials in the new Afghans state.[33] From the data, we can measure military stature by the number of sub-commanders associated with an individual (where a sub-commander is such only if he is a member of the elite). By these criteria, Table 4 lists the six most prominent commanders in 2001 in the two districts. The leading two in each district had both aligned themselves with the Taliban government of the 1990s, although all four eventually repudiated the movement. In Maiwand, Hajji Bashar and Hajji Burget Khan went from supporting the Taliban

[33] These pre-existing ties refer to ties between the individual and those elites who would either form the new Afghan state or work closely with the foreign troops.

Table 4 - Prominent Commanders in 2001: Top Two Commanders Were Targeted

		Sub-Commanders	State Tie	Taliban Tie
Deh Rawud	Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund	22	No	Yes
	Ghulam Nabi Khan Aka	13	No	Yes
	Hajji Mohammad Ikhlas Aka	11	Yes	No
	District Mean	3.7	27.4	23.6
Maiwand	Hajji Bashar	26	No	Yes
	Hajji Burget Khan	17	No	Yes
	Hameed Agha	6	Yes	No
	District Mean	5.0	20.3	21.0

Note: District mean of sub-commanders refers to the average number of sub-commanders per mujahedeen leader in the district. "District mean" of state and Taliban ties refer to the percentage of elites who had preexisting ties to state elites and the erstwhile Taliban government, respectively. It is unclear if Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund actually had Taliban ties, but he was perceived as having them by rivals, so he is coded as such here. "Hameed Agha" refers to commanders under Hameed Agha's faction of the National Islamic Front. He was not present in the district in 2001 (and is not, in fact, from Maiwand) but his group nonetheless constitutes the third largest faction there.

government to supporting the U.S.-backed Hamid Karzai government; in a number of public displays, the pair turned over weapons to the new government and directed their sub-commanders to do the same. Both took up positions of authority after 2001; Hajji Bashar was elected as district governor by local elites, and Hajji Burget Khan was elected as a delegate to the Emergency Loya Jirga, a national assembly of elites meant to approve Hamid Karzai as transitional president. In Deh Rawud, the prominent mujahedeen commander Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund had openly resisted the Taliban when they first appeared in his district in 1995, and then fled to Pakistan. Later he returned home and lived under Taliban rule, which prompted his rivals to accuse him of Taliban links. Nevertheless, after 2001 he declared his support for the new order and was a member of the first, short-lived *shura* meant to represent the district. Ghulam Nabi Khan served briefly as a commander within the Taliban ranks, but resigned in the late 1990s. After 2001, he announced his support for the new administration and took a government job in Deh Rawud's attorney general's office.

But all four would be killed, imprisoned, or driven from the district. With the above criteria for targeting—

military prowess, Taliban ties, and no state ties—they made for easy targets within the incentive structure set forth by the foreign military intervention. Hajji Burget Khan was killed in a raid by U.S. special forces; Hajji Bashar was driven from the district after repeated government raids (and was eventually arrested by the U.S.); Ghulam Nabi Khan was imprisoned by U.S. forces, and Mullah Khudai Nazar fled the district to avoid arrest.

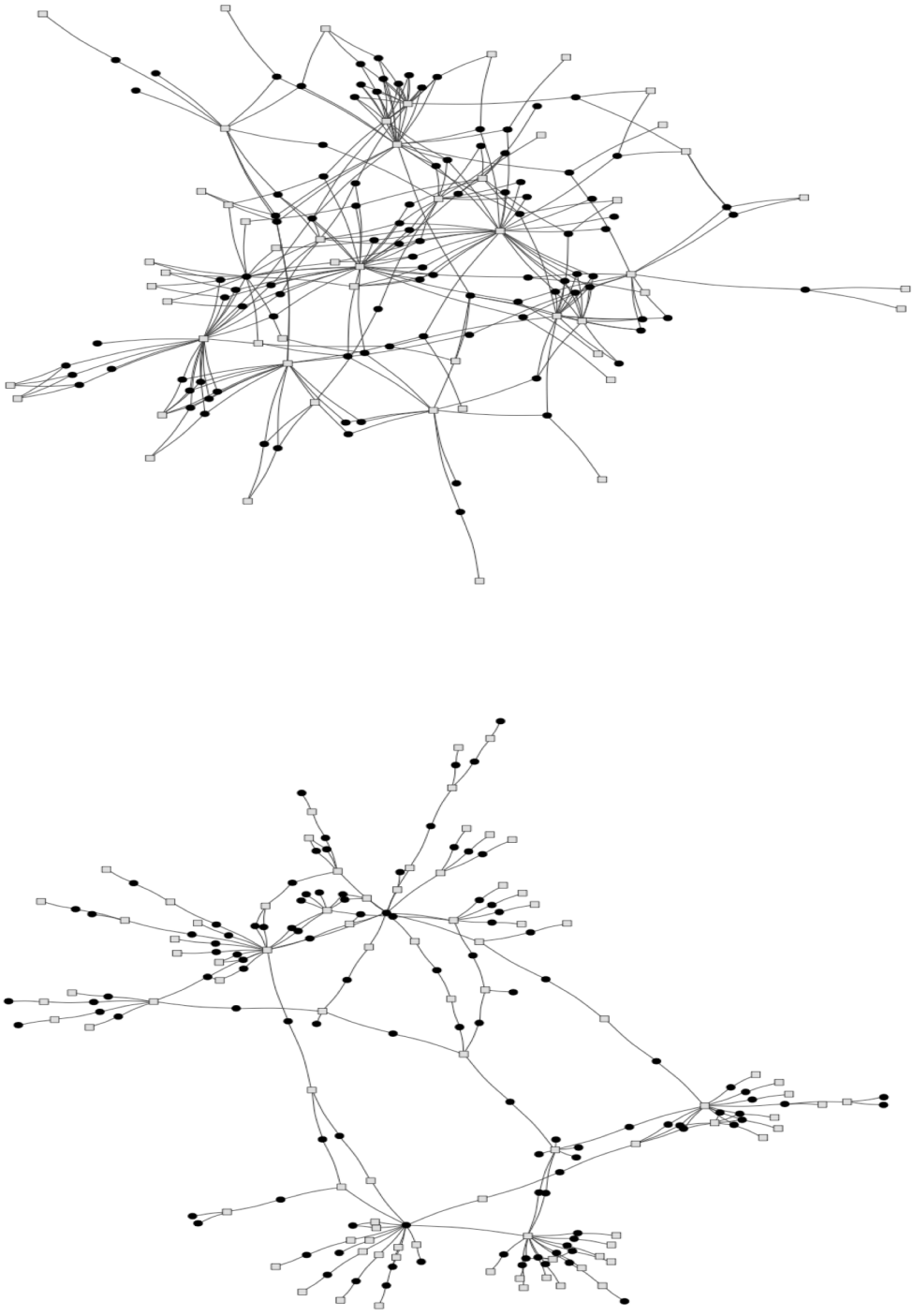
Overall, in the first three years following 2001, seven elites in Deh Rawud and six in Maiwand were targeted. Crucially, the criteria for targeting was *identical* in both districts—hence in Table 4, the top two figures in each district were targeted (while the third was left alone). In other words, American and Afghan-state targeting policy was not district-specific and applied a uniform set of criteria nationally; however, Afghan social structure varies across districts, and for this reason a targeting strategy similarly applied in two districts can produce two very different outcomes, as the next section will show.

Elite networks

Figure 1 depicts the bi-partite elite networks (the affiliations of actors to tribe, village, mujahedeen group, and commander group) in Deh Rawud and Maiwand, respectively, and Figure 2 depicts the 1-mode transformations.[34] Following the standard interpretation of affiliation networks (e.g., Borgatti and Everett 1997), a tie in the 1-mode networks indicates co-affiliation and the increased likelihood, relative to a null relation, of a social tie. The differences between the networks of the two districts are immediately apparent: Maiwand is a relatively sparse network structured around three semi-cliques, whereas Deh Rawud is

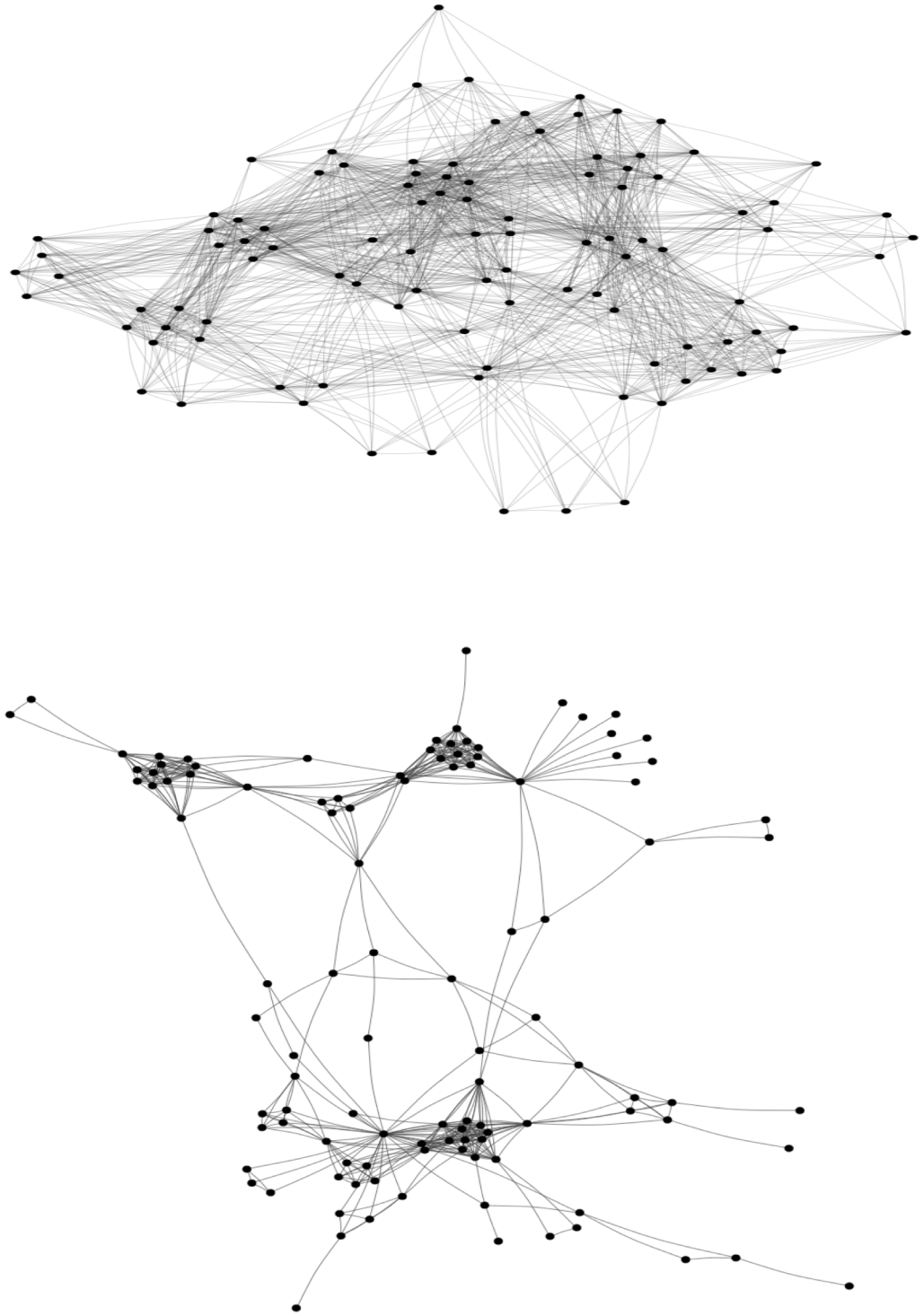
[34] Tribal ties were normalized separately to account for their density. The sociological explanation for this is that two actors are much more likely to know each other, and cooperate, when they are affiliated with a group that is smaller in membership. Since tribe overwhelms village and mujahedeen affiliation, tribal ties were normalized.

Figure 7 - Deh Rawud (Top) and Maiwand (Bottom) Elite Affiliation (Actor-Group) Networks



Note: Bi-partite affiliation networks. Filled circles are individuals, squares are affiliation events (tribe, village, mujahedeen co-membership, and commander group)

Figure 2 - Deh Rawud (Top) and Maiwand (Bottom) Elite Co-affiliation (Actor-Actor) Networks



Note: Uni-partite (co-affiliation) network. All four networks have been dichotomized at 1.0 for visual clarity.

Table 5 - Network Comparison: Deh Rawud is Far Denser than Maiwand

	Deh Rawud	Maiwand
Average Degree	52.8	45.9
Centralization	0.266	0.170
Density	0.508	0.294
Mean Geodesic Distance	1.508	2.078
Harmonic Mean Geo. Distance	0.751	0.587
Avg. Betweenness (Top 2 Elites)	16.00	1.789

dominated by a large, densely interconnected region. Table 5 confirms these visual suggestions; the Deh Rawud elite network is nearly twice as dense as Maiwand. The mean harmonic geodesic distance (the normalized harmonic mean of shortest distance paths between all pairs of nodes) is an indication of network compactness; by this measure Deh Rawud nearly 50 percent more compact than Maiwand. The denseness suggests overlapping connections between elites; in this close-knit social world, everyone is separated by only one or two degrees. In Maiwand, Hajji Bashar and Hajji Burget Khan, the two individuals who were the most prominent commanders in 2001—and were therefore targeted—occupy key positions in the network, ranking one and three, respectively, in betweenness centrality. In Deh Rawud, Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund and Ghulam Nabi Khan were targeted using the exact same criteria, but because they do not dominate the network in terms of betweenness, the effect of their removal did not have significant disruptive effects.

This explanation is imprecise, however, because betweenness centrality is defined only for binary networks, and the affiliation networks here are valued (Figures 1 and 2 have been dichotomized only for clarity purposes) (Freeman 1977). Furthermore, in terms of rank, the difference in betweenness between targeted elites in the two districts is not great enough to warrant significant differences in disruptive effects. This is because, as described above, betweenness is only an approximate indicator of key players in multilevel networks such as these. Interviews with state officials and elites in the field suggest that targeting affected associated individuals in two ways. First, the more closely affiliated an actor was to a targeted individual—through tribe, village, and/or mujahedeen membership—the more so he felt that the targeting was an attack

against himself. In other words, affiliation is linked to notions of identity. One *malek* in Maiwand recalled

> When [the Americans] killed Hajji Burget Khan, we knew none of us were safe anymore. The Americans and Sherzai [the Kandahar governor who directed the Americans to attack] had declared war on us, and soon every person in Band-i-Timor [the *manteqa* where Hajji Burget Khan is from] and every Ishaqzai [Hajij Burget Khan's tribe] in the world felt that they needed to defend themselves.

Second, close affiliation was read as shared identity by the perpetrators of the attacks as well. Such "guilt by association" created the grounds for exclusion. Here is a spokesman for the Kandahar government, a key ally of the U.S. military, describing the aftermath of a 2002 operation in which the entire police force of Maiwand was arrested on accusations of being "Taliban members":

> Yes those were insecure times and we needed to solve the problem. The men who were arrested were all connected Hajji Bashar. They were with him even from the the jihad times [the anti-Soviet mujahedeen war]. They were his people [and] so they were Taliban and al Qaeda.

These impressions suggest that the more closely affiliated elite *j* is with targeted elite *i*, in the sense of the greater extent to which *j*'s network of affiliations is subsumed in *i*'s, the more likely he is to be excluded from state and foreign patronage. Table 6 lists the nodes with the highest affiliation centrality in each district. Two trends immediately stand out. First, elites targeted according to identical criteria in each district (Table 4) have quite different network positions in terms of affiliation centrality. In Maiwand, Hajji Burget Khan and Hajji Bashar are the two most central nodes by this measure, whereas the key targeted elites in Deh Rawud, Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund and Ghulam Nabi Khan, are not even among the top ten most central in their network. Second, targeting in these two districts led to such disparate outcomes because of the way in which the Maiwand network is dominated by two nodes, whereas the Deh Rawud network is not. The mean Z-score for the top targeted elites in Deh Rawud is 1.80, whereas in Maiwand it is 6.89—indicating that the targeted Maiwand elites are significant outliers in the network in terms of affiliation. Of those affiliated with targeted individuals, the mean difference between affiliation with the target and non-target is nearly two orders of magnitude larger in Maiwand than in Deh Rawud. This

Table 6 - Affiliation Centrality

Deh Rawud		Maiwand	
	Affiliation Centrality		
Malek Nazar Ali Aka	3.00	7.44	Hajji Burget Khan
Mohammad Azam Aka	2.67	6.76	Hajji Bashar
Abdul Baqi	2.67	2.94	Malek Nasrullah
Talib Aka	2.66	2.93	Sirajuddin
Hajji Malek Karim	2.66	2.85	Hajji Mirza
Mean	1.90	1.27	**Mean**
S. Deviation	0.321	0.471	**S. Deviation**
	Z-score		
Ghulam Nabi Khan	1.88	7.35	Hajji Burget Khan
M.K. Nazar Akhund	1.71	6.43	Hajji Bashar

Note: Mean and S.D. figures are based on normalized values.

Table 7 - Logistic Regression of Government Office on Network Affiliation

Predictor	Coefficient
Hajji Burget Khan	-28.479*
	(14.781)
Hajji Bashar	-8.649**
	(4.131)
Constant	-0.546**
	(0.239)
df	2

Note: Standard errors are in parenthesis.
* $P < .10$
** $P < .05$

indicates that those individuals closely affiliated with a targeted elite in Maiwand are much less affiliated with non-targeted elites. In Deh Rawud, on the other hand, affiliation with a targeted elite does not set an individual off from the rest of the network; these nodes tend to be closely affiliated with non-targeted nodes as well.[35] As a result, an individual who is perceived as close to a targeted elite is not necessarily branded as a "Taliban" or 'Al Qaeda" sympathizer, because he is simultaneously close to non-targeted elites who are in the good graces of the state builders and their foreign patrons.

The logistic regression presented in Table 7 confirms this interpretation. In the regression, holding a government office is coded as "1" and exclusion is coded as "0," so a negative coefficient (the log odds) indicates an increased likelihood of exclusion. In Maiwand, affiliation with a targeted individual is strongly

[35] "Close" affiliation is of course a relative term. In these networks, the mean affiliation between any pair of nodes is a small (less than 0.010) so it is possible for a node to be closely affiliated to multiple other nodes, if we take "close" to mean one or more standard deviations above the mean.

associated with the increased likelihood of exclusion from patronage; close affiliation with Hajji Burget Khan, who was killed in a U.S. raid based on false intelligence, almost ensured exclusion from the benefits of state formation. In Deh Rawud, however, there is no statistically significant association between targeting affiliation and government office ($p \approx 0.43$ for affiliation with Ghulam Nabi Khan and $p \approx 0.58$ for affiliation with Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund). Individuals closely affiliated with these elites were also closely affiliated with other (non-targeted) elites, thereby mitigating the effects of guilt by association and complicating the development of shared identity.

DISCUSSION

Because of network structure, the targeting of a few individuals in Maiwand pushed large numbers of elites outside the state orbit. This rendered them ineffective as brokers, thereby making their protective services unavailable to their clients. Among the many consequences of this dislocation was the production of a cultural frame that repudiated state-centered norms and legal institutions, a stance that some authors call "legal cynicism," (e.g., Kirk and Papachristos, 2011). In their study of the Iraq war, for example, Hagan, Kaiser, and Hansen (2015) describe the Iraqi insurgency as a legal-cynical response to the American occupation and the predicament of that country's Sunnis. In Maiwand, individuals in communities bereft of patrons developed a legal-cynical attitude towards government institutions and the foreign presence. Taliban members who had defected from the *ancien régime* began to repudiate their support for the new order and reconnect with old comrades. In dislocated communities, they were initially welcomed as protectors against the (seemingly) arbitrary violence of the state and foreign forces. One elder from the Band-i-Timor region of Maiwand recalled

> The government was corrupt and they were killing us. You could not find anyone to support you so we asked the Taliban to be with us. Maybe we did not want them, but there was no other choice.

In this way, by 2004 Maiwand became a hotbed of insurgency while Deh Rawud came firmly under government control. As Kalyvas (2006) has pointed out, the *initial causes* of insurgency and civil war are not necessarily the same as the sustaining logic of a conflict—but as a path-dependent process, the two districts remain locked in this configuration to this day. Countrywide, the dynamics of elite incorporation and exclusion produced far-reaching effects in the communities that depended on these elites, producing a mosaic of state formation: legal cynicism and insurgency in some areas, and state integration in others.

If the differing network topologies explain the disparate outcomes in Deh Rawud and Maiwand, it raises the question: why were elite networks structured so differently, when so much else between the districts appears to be so similar? Further work needs to be done to plumb the depths of pre-2001 history, but the present data can help offer the first outlines of a theory. Historically, Deh Rawud was home to numerous conflicts over land and other resources (perhaps because of its rugged terrain and lack of arable land) which intensified with the onset of the anti-Soviet jihad when commanders squabbled over C.I.A.-sourced patronage. This led to the frequent switching of sides, the formation of alliances and the quick breakdown of friendships, all of which was part of the delicate dance of survival in a society undergoing upheaval and state collapse. Kinship and tribe became a potent form of solidarity in times of such insecurity (Rubin 1996), and it was a mode through which people made and remade affiliations.

To take one example, Abdul Baqi was a Noorzai tribal elite who had been aligned with the Communists (the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) but then switched sides to join a mujahedeen faction under the command of fellow Noorzai Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund. The result of such moves was a dense and fluctuating network of alliances and rivalries. At the same time, the availability of rents in the form of C.I.A. patronage also divided tribes: For example, in the 1980s Mullah Khudai Nazar Akhund harbored a rivalry with fellow Noorzai tribesman Hajji Mohammad Ikhlas Aka (one of the strongest commanders in the district) which stemmed from the ongoing battle between their respective mujahedeen factions over C.I.A. guns and money. During this internecine fighting, which lasted through the 1980s and early 1990s until the

emergence of the Taliban, sub-commanders would sometimes switch from Mullah Nazar to Hajji Ikhlas, or vice versa, depending on who was more successful at that moment in capturing rents. At other times, the two sides would come to temporary peace pacts. Meanwhile, Mullah Nazar's rivalry with the Popalzai tribe—originating from an incident in the 1980s when he executed suspected Popalzai criminals—pushed Hajji Ikhlas to align with the Popalzais to achieve something akin to structural balance. Thus a longer standing rivalry between the Noorzai and Popalzai tribes was subsumed by the intra-tribal Noorzai rivalry.

The point for our purposes is that this carousel of alliances and rivalries produced ample opportunity for "cross affiliation." Figure 3, a bipartite graph of relations between tribes and mujahedeen parties, makes this clear. The thickness of an edge indicates the number of elites who were jointly affiliated with two nodes connected by that edge. The mujahedeen party Hizb-i-Islami Gulbuddin was headed by Mullah Nazar (Noorzai), and Hizb-i-Islami Khalis by Ghulam Nabi (Babozai), both of whom were targeted by the Americans after 2001—but because the Noorzai and Babozai tribes were evenly split between three parties, there was plentiful opportunity for closely affiliated elites, through tribal links, to be simultaneously closely affiliated with other elites. The legacy of inter-elite rivalry and fighting ironically produced ideal conditions for cross affiliation, which protected elites from state and foreign violence and incentivized incorporation into the center.

The comparison with Maiwand is stark. According to local respondents, there is no significant history of internecine fighting in Maiwand. This is because there is no similar history of major land and resource conflicts (perhaps because of the greater availability of arable land), so that the onset of mujahedeen patronage did not serve to intensify the divisions of an already riven elite. Interviewees spoke of an ordered fight against the Soviets, and after Moscow's withdrawal most of the district remained (relatively) peaceful even as it was divided into fiefs under the control of local notables like Hajji Bashar.[36] This produced a

[36] Fighting and insecurity raged only along the main highway—which eventually spurred the emergence of the Taliban to clear the roads of bandits and predatory checkpoints.

much closer identification between tribe and mujahedeen party, and fewer opportunities for cross affiliation. In the bottom of figure 3, for example, the Hizb-i-Islami Khalis party chapter (under the command of Hajji Bashar) is dominated by his Noorzai tribe; nearly every Noorzai elite who took part in the anti-Soviet jihad in Maiwand was closely affiliated with Hajji Bashar. When he was driven from the district, it touched the entire Noorzai elite structure—and nearly one-third of Maiwand's population—in some way.

Pre-modern Europe was a violent, backwards territory in comparison with the surrounding empires, and ironically it was this underdevelopment—which spurred warfare and organizational centralization—that allowed Europe to leapfrog over its more peaceful, developed neighbors and eventually come to submit them to its authority. In a rough analogy, it was Deh Rawud's violent, dysfunctional past that prepared the grounds for its peaceful cooptation into the new order, and ironically, Maiwand's ordered past that made it a victim of modern state formation.

Because of the segmented, fractious nature of exclusion and solidarity, there was no clear identity-based division between the incorporated and excluded. In Maiwand, the bulk of the Noorzai tribal elite was excluded, but in Deh Rawud, cross affiliation allowed the majority of the Noorzai elite enjoy the benefits of state formation. The excluded drew from a system of meanings to make sense of their predicament, using the prevailing resources of social critique and the prevailing repertoires of contention in a country that, in recent memory, had been occupied by the atheistic Soviet regime: jihad, national liberation, anti-Imperialism. In such a segmented social order, in the minds of actors the only universal critique that could account for the varying patterns of social exclusion, and which transcended tribal and ethnic boundaries,

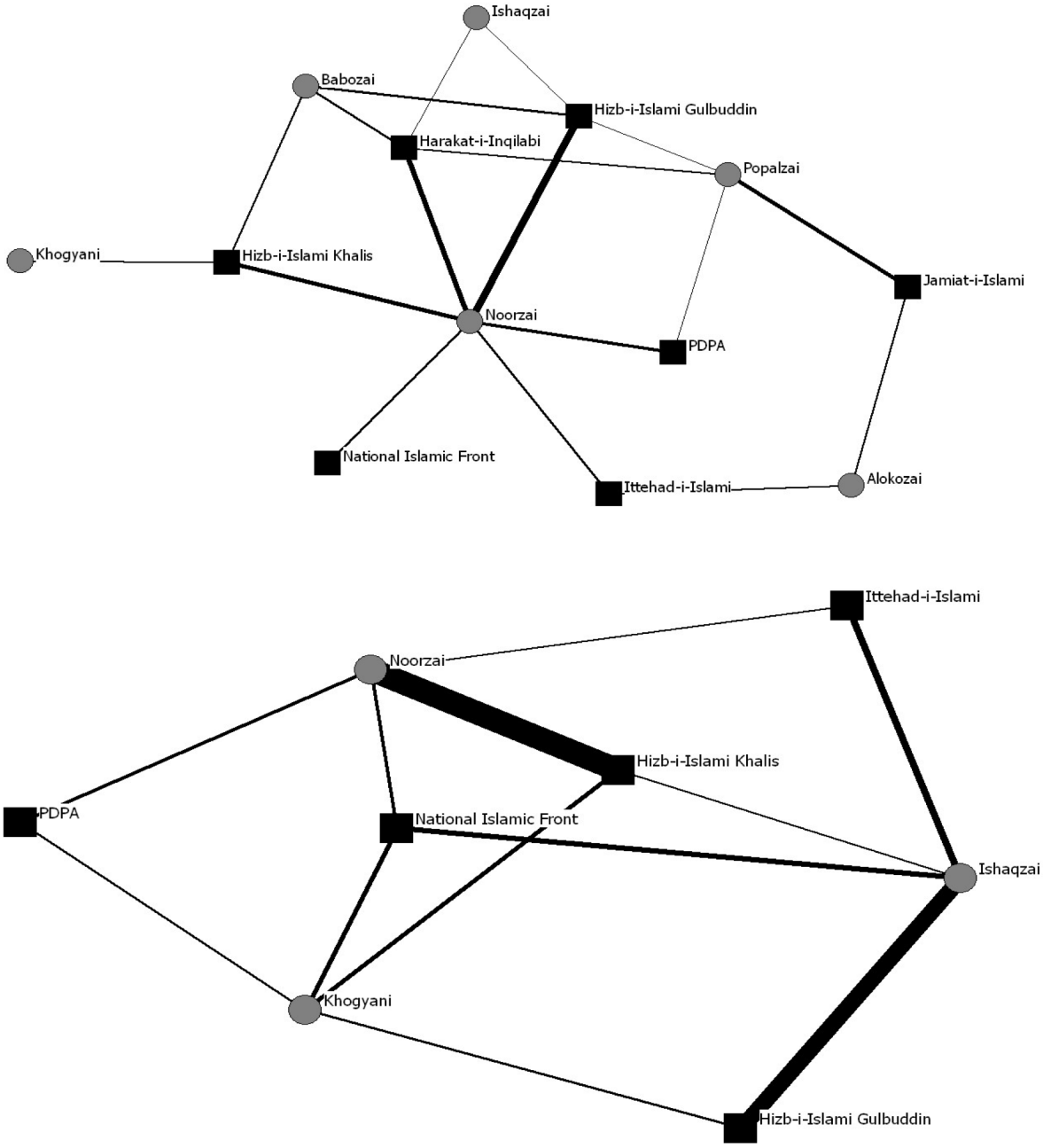


Figure 3- Tribe-Party Bi-partite Network, Deh Rawud (Top) and Maiwand (Bottom)

Note: Tribe-party affiliation (bi-partite) network. Circles are tribes, squares are mujahedeen parties. Maiwand shows much closer identification between tribe and party than Deh Rawud.

was political Islam.

Conclusion

This examination of elite incorporation and exclusion in southern Afghanistan contributes to the study of political violence in three ways: methodological, substantive, theoretical. First, it develops an analytical tool, affiliation centrality, to probe local structure through matching attributes. More generally, it demonstrates how network data might be leveraged to study modern civil war—especially when researchers lack access to directly reported ties, and must rely on easier-to-collect attribute data. Second, it demonstrates that prevailing theories that directly or indirectly purport to explain the war in Afghanistan are inadequate, and puts forth a new explanation for the Afghan insurgency. Third, it demonstrates that the dynamic of elite alienation and incorporation is not merely an artifact of historical Europe, but play a vital role in modern-day state formation and civil war. Strategies of state building unfold in the nexus of the international state system and the granular social structure of the local level, and the Afghan case suggests that in newly forming states this interaction can play a crucial role in the onset of civil war.

Attributes into relations

A number of studies have highlighted the role of social networks in the processes of civil war (Weinstein 2006; Pearlman 2011; Staniland 2014). But there are almost no studies undertaking formal network analysis to explore the causes of modern civil war. One reason is due to the challenge of collecting the sort of finely-tuned, granular data necessary for such an analysis. The strategy I have used here offers one approach around this, by examining matching attributes through the principle of homophily to capture how individuals are linked in networks of affiliations. By shifting from attributes to relations, new possibilities

for analyzing processes like patronage and clientelism emerge. For example, authors studying elite incorporation discuss the role of elite exclusion in promoting state dysfunctionality and political violence (Reno 1999; Lindemann 2008; 2010). However, the findings here show that elite exclusion did not, by itself, lead to resistance. Similarly, direct co-optation of elites was not always necessary to forestall resistance. While 54% of Deh Rawud elites were incorporated into government office, 46% were not—and yet neither these excluded elites nor their constituents turned to rebellion. The explanation is that individuals who did not directly gain government office nonetheless accrued the benefits by virtue of their affiliation with favored individuals. In other words, characterizing the horizontal relations between elites are just as vital as capturing vertical ties between elites and the state.

Explaining the Afghan War

The most common theories of insurgency are poor predictors of violence in Afghanistan. Counterinsurgency theories that link the lack of aid or other hearts-and-minds approaches to insurgency do not account for the initial patterns of rebel mobilization. Of course, most counterinsurgency studies do not address the onset of violence and initial rebel mobilization, focusing instead on the separate question of how aid disbursal affects on-going violence. Even in this case, however, the evidence does not favor a straightforward causal link between aid and decreased violence. After the U.S. troop surge in 2008, Maiwand began receiving far more aid than Deh Rawud in response to its status as a rebel stronghold. In 2010, for example, the U.S.'s Commander Emergency Response Fund earmarked or disbursed over $1.7 million in aid to Maiwand, compared to only $624,000 in Deh Rawud (Commanders Emergency Response, 2011)—but to little effect. In fact, it may be that in Deh Rawud and Maiwand patterns of violence followed a path-dependent process, with neither the troop surge or aid spending making an effect. Further (indirect) evidence for this comes from a large scale randomized controlled trial by Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov (2016), who found that aid disbursal is linked with decreased insurgent violence. This would appear to

contradict my claim above, but in fact the districts studied were not a random sample; the study greatly over-represents areas where the Taliban did not have a base of support in the initial period of rebel mobilization between 2004 and 2007. Those areas where the Taliban had a stronger base in the initial period in fact showed an *increase* in violence after the disbursal of aid (likely because it produced more targets to attack).

Beath et al.'s study used insurgent violence (as measured by the foreign forces) as the dependent variable. But insurgent violence is not straightforwardly related to insurgent control; in uncontested areas, such as regions where the insurgents control territory and foreign forces are not present, violence will be low and will be a poor indicator of rebel strength (Kalyvas 2006, 2008). Without understanding patterns of rebel control and the factors underpinning it, it is difficult to make strong claims about the effect of aid. This study shows that aid may indeed be a factor in initial rebel mobilization, but it is necessary to conduct this analysis from the ground up—from the village level—and to broaden the conception of aid to the sorts of material, legal, and security-based resources that patronage makes available.

Theories pointing to cultural frames of legitimacy such as ethnicity fail to account for patterns of insurgent mobilization. In Deh Rawud and Maiwand, the insurgency, the government, and the population are overwhelmingly Pashtun. Tribal membership, too, is an inadequate predictor of insurgency: in Maiwand, Noorzai areas are largely anti-government, whereas in Deh Rawud Noorzai territory is under government control. Finally, "opportunity models," such as that proposed by Fearon and Laitin (2003), incorrectly predict that Deh Rawud, not Maiwand, should be the insurgent hotbed. Instead, it is patterns of patronage incorporation and exclusion that best explain the subnational variation in the Afghan war.

State Formation and Civil War in the Modern World

While many studies of insurgency and civil war examine the role of the state—particularly, in terms of state weakness—they rarely investigate such violence in terms of *state formation*. That is, state capacity is taken as an *a priori* independent variable that predicts the onset of civil war and insurgency. However, a number of states in the non-Western world—particularly those failing to meet the classic Weberian definition of statehood while nonetheless enjoying *de jure* status as states (Jackson and Rosberg 1982)—are in an extended process of state collapse and reformation, including Yemen, Libya, and Iraq. The findings here may shed light on the role of the effect of state building strategies in these countries on the onset of civil war.

In some ways, this is similar to the process that unfolded in historical Europe, but at the same time this study highlights the important differences between the current moment and the historical antecedents studied by Gould (1996), MacHardy (1992) and others. The most significant difference is the embeddedness of state-makers in the international state system; the Afghan case shows that unlike early modern Europe, the acts of incorporation and exclusion today are heavily influenced by the incentives and prerogatives of foreign patrons, exogenous rents, and international norms. In the Afghanistan case, there are other important differences as well. Unlike elites in early modern Europe or colonial-era United States, excluded Afghan elites themselves rarely participated directly in the insurgency (in some cases because they were killed or imprisoned). Instead, elites facing the prospect of state and U.S. predation simply fled (which would have been much more difficult in the sixteenth century), leaving the terrain for their impoverished clients, who framed the events through the prism of legal cynicism. This was one opening by which a single organization, the Taliban, was able to monopolize the discourse of resistance in what was a fragmented, multifaceted pattern of exclusion. This provided an important link between local, particularistic disputes (between local informants and targeted communities) and the abstract rhetorics of universalist jihad.

Historically, the strategy for successful incorporation was for the state to offer inducements to those elites who could claim to maintain the largest number of clients, thereby minimizing the extent of exclusion and

weakening possible resistance. In the modern era, however, the threshold of control required for colonizers and occupiers is far lower than for autochthonous state builders. The material and political interests of colonizers may be substantial, but it is never as great as it is for independent native rulers; foreign powers can absorb instabilities at the peripheries of their empire in a way that independent local state builders cannot. This means that the classic logic of the state builder—offer inducements to elites representing the majority—is subordinated to the logic of foreign control, in which inducements can be offered for a variety of reasons, and can be directed to minorities just as much as majorities. In mandate-era Syria, for example, France used patronage of elites in the *minority* Alawite, Druze, and Christian communities as a way to hedge against the Arab nationalism of the Sunni majority. The logic was not to further state centralization or organizational penetration of the periphery, but to empower "trustworthy" local elites to help maintain short- and medium-term stability by keeping the larger population at bay. Similarly, in Iraq the British, and their client King Faisal, cultivated tribal elites from the minority Sunni community at the expense of the Shia and Kurd majority. Decades later, during the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the Americans followed in this tradition. In the town of Hit, in Anbar province, the foreign troops forged patronage ties to elites from the Albu Nimr tribe, who live on the town's outskirts, at the expense of elites inside the town (Lindeman 2009). Their reason for doing so was because of the Albu Nimr's poor relations, and therefore weak social ties, with the ousted state of Saddam Hussein. This choice locked in social positions of various elites in the area with respect to the Iraqi state—the Albu Nimr increasingly benefited from state and foreign patronage relative to those inside the town—and as a consequence, the excluded elites became leaders of anti-government opposition in the town in 2013. They eventually sided with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Gopal 2016). Ultimately, the abstract rhetoric of ethnic and religious categories, and the ways in which individuals interpret these, is indissolubly linked to the structure of social ties in which they are embedded.

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3

Ideology and Defection in the Afghan Taliban

ABSTRACT

The Afghan Taliban has maintained remarkable coherence over three decades of conflict. Nearly a third of the group's leadership defected to the side of the Afghan government after 2001, and yet the group remained cohesive and potent. What motivated the defectors to switch sides, and how did the movement survive these losses? Prevailing theories of defection from insurgent groups or Islamist movements focus on attributional explanations (usually, related to tribe or ethnicity) or "ideological" ones (that view movements composed of "moderates" and "extremists"). Instead, this chapter finds that an individual's embeddedness in the relational network of the Taliban leadership better predicts his likelihood of defection than either attributional or ideological theories. Through detailed interviews with defectors, it proposes an alternative model of ideation, where political ideology among actors in civil war is a system of meaning to interpret and pursue certain ends that are heavily influenced by the life-and-death choices posed by the war itself.

Introduction

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, the country's main Communist organization, took power in 1978 and almost immediately suffered a split. For the next fifteen years, the Communist movement was riven into two competing wings, both major forces in the country's political and military life until the overthrow of the Soviet-backed government in 1992. One of the PDPA's principal opponents was the radical mujahedeen organization Hizb-i-Islami ("The Party of Islam"). It was the dominant force in the anti-government opposition for over a decade; after the 2001 U.S. Invasion, though, the group split, with one side joining the American-backed government and the other retreating to the countryside to wage guerrilla war. Since the conflict's beginning in 1978, nearly every major military-political organization has similarly suffered formal and informal splits, and not a single group on the political spectrum has survived the past 36 years intact—except one. To date, the Taliban has maintained an organizational cohesion unprecedented in Afghan history. Through its years at the helm of the Afghan state in the mid-nineties to its role as an insurgency today, the group has not suffered any significant splits. This despite the fact that of the roughly 150 individuals who held leadership positions during the 1990s Taliban government, over a third (59) left the movement after 2001 and joined the U.S.-backed Afghan government. What accounts for the Taliban's organizational success, and why do members decide to stay or leave?

Scholarship on social movements has analyzed in detail the conditions that facilitate collective action, the factors that influence an individual's decision to join or support a movement, and how movement organizations mobilize to meet political aims (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004; Benford and Snow, 2000; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). These studies tend to focus on non-violent movements in Western countries, although in recent years scholars have begun applying insights from the sub-field to movements espousing some version of political Islam (Wickham, 2005; Karagiannis, 2005). In general, however, the question of defection—who leaves a movement, under what conditions, and with what organizational consequences—has not received sufficient attention.

Among the few social movement scholars to investigate the issue, Hirsch (1990) theorized that outside threats would bind activists together, discouraging defection. But in the Taliban, defection was greatest during the period in which the group faced the greatest external threat, from 2001 to 2005. Klandermans (1997), found that individuals who withdrew from the Dutch peace movement of the mid-1980s did so because of their marginal position among the activists, reflected in the fact that they spent less time on movement activities. But it seems unlikely that we could generalize these findings to cases of armed political movements in the midst of a civil war. In the study of civil war, Kalyvas (2008) explored the issue of ethnic defection—when individuals in armed groups predominately of one ethnicity defect to groups of a different ethnicity—and showed that ethnic identity fails to predict a unique type of political allegiance. Afghanistan, though, is not an ethnic civil war—the insurgency and the government are Pashtun-dominated—which opens the question of whether the process Kalyvas described might also occur with non-ethnic forms of identity, such as being a Talib.

Researchers on Afghanistan have addressed the question of defection indirectly, by assuming that the reasons why individuals leave the movement is related to, and perhaps the inverse of, the reasons why they initially joined. I group these explanations into two broad categories: attributional and ideological. By attributional, I mean the various individual-level traits and biographical details such as ethnicity and tribe that are popular in explanations of the civil war and the Taliban specifically. By ideological, I refer to the various normative commitments which, many scholars argue, bind the Taliban together; this view presupposes that individuals have fixed, pre-determined values and beliefs, and their career trajectory inside or outside the movement depends, at least in part, on the congruence of values between them and the rest of the movement.

This article shows that neither type of explanation can explain defection from, and coherence within, the Taliban. Rather, it demonstrates that it was the way in which individuals were embedded in the network of

affiliations of the Taliban leadership, and the degree of group solidarity this embeddedness engendered, that best predicts whether individuals remained in the movement or defected. This builds on Bearman's (1991) investigation of the American Civil War, one of the most detailed examinations of defection in armed factions. He found that desertion rates were higher among units that were more homogenous with respect to place of origin. In these cases, localist identity replaced Confederate identity, undermining the South's war effort. Here, I show how an individual's structural position in the network of the Taliban leadership generates his sense of group solidarity, which informs his sense of identity. Those individuals who occupied either central positions or brokerage roles in the leadership network—irrespective of their formal positions in the movement—were more likely to remain in the movement, and were more likely to identify as Taliban during the difficult years of 2001 to 2005, when the movement was in disarray. On the other hand, those individuals who did not achieve brokerage roles, or occupied less central positions, were more likely to revert to alternate identities (usually those from before the Taliban's formation). I show through interviews with defectors that ideological differences, or changing normative commitments, came *after* the decision to leave, not before.

In many social networks, a relatively few individuals may play the role of broker or hold central positions. Here, however, I demonstrate that the Taliban's organization success was due, in part, to the fact that it distributed these roles and positions broadly throughout the leadership, which meant that the defection of nearly a third of the leadership after 2001 did not disrupt organizational integrity. Importantly, this organizational structure was an unintended consequence of Taliban state building between 1994-2001: supreme leader Mullah Omar frequently rotated individuals between ministries as a way of curbing the development of independent power blocs within the movement. A side effect of this strategy was the creation of a large group of brokers within the movement, which would help the organization survive its most difficult years after it was expelled from power, laying the basis for the insurgency that rages to this day.

In what follows, I first describe the unique data sources used in this study, and how I constructed the independent and dependent variables. I then review in greater detail the predominant theories of Taliban recruitment and defection, with the aim of testing these theories against the data. Sections four and five describe the network structure of the Taliban leadership and how certain key network features such as brokerage help predict defection. Section five makes use of extensive interviews with defectors to develop a theory of the relationship between normative commitment, identity, and embeddedness; it seeks to understand how defectors made sense of their decision, and the systems of meaning that help form their current identity. I conclude with thoughts about how the middle-range processes described in this study can help theoretically sharpen our understanding of the concept of ideology.

Data and Methods

Attribute Selection

The difficulty in studying the Taliban is in the paucity of data; because few English-speaking observers managed to spend time in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan (the group was in power from 1996 to 2001), most studies of the movement tend to be anecdotal. Great confusion still persists as to who exactly comprised the leadership of the movement. However, the Taliban government actually produced a voluminous output of newspapers, magazines, and other forms of propaganda in the local Pashto language. Over three years, two co-workers and I collected these written materials from around Afghanistan as part of an initiative called the Taliban Sources Project (Strick van Linshoten, Kuehn, and Gopal, 2016). The aim was to make Taliban materials publicly available to researchers. The archive contains three million words, across nearly a dozen Taliban-produced magazines, newspapers, and memoirs that span the period 1994-2014.

The key publications used in this study are *Shariat* and *Tolo-ye-Afghan*, the two flagship dailies of the Taliban government. They contain notices whenever an individual is appointed to a new government post; often, given the poor communications infrastructure at the time, individuals only learned of their appointment by reading it in the newspaper or hearing it on the radio. In this study, I focus on the Taliban leadership. By leadership, I mean any person who held a senior position in the Taliban government, which I define as the highest or second-highest ranking office across all legislative, executive, judicial, and military bodies of the state; I restrict the definition only to these two levels because of their decision-making authority, and because they were political appointments from the center (the lower echelons of the ministries included holdovers from previous governments, and the lower echelons of the military included conscripts). The data set therefore consists of those who held (*a*) a ministerial or deputy-ministerial position in the Taliban government's 20 ministries (105 individuals) (*b*) a judicial position at the "chief justice" or deputy level (9 individuals) (*c*) a position in or associated with the office of supreme leader Mullah Muhammad Omar (15 individuals) and (*d*) a military post at the level of zone commander or higher (16 individuals, a "zone" being roughly equivalent to a U.S. army corps in size).

The resulting 145 individuals form an accurate estimate of who comprised the Taliban leadership. As a check, I compared this list with the United Nations Security Council's Sanctions index, which lists Taliban members whose assets were frozen due to sanctions in the late 1990s. There is considerable overlap between the two lists, the key differences being that the U.N. list included a number of lower-ranking members predominately in the foreign service, and was missing a number of high-ranking members who worked in the military or in Mullah Omar's office and therefore did not have formal positions visible to outsiders.

For each individual in the data set, I then developed a list of attributes: (*a*) ethnicity (*b*) tribe (*c*) place of origin (*d*) place of education and (*e*) membership in 1980s anti-Soviet *mujahedeen* group (if any). The data for these attributes originated in various sources, including (*a*) published and unpublished memoirs of Taliban members, including Zaeef (2010), Mutawakil (2007), Agha (2014), and Mojdeh (2002) (*b*) Strick

van Linschoten and Kuehn's *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban-al Qaeda Merger* (2012), which contains biographical notes of a number of Taliban leaders (*c*) "martyr" biographies in *Al-Samoud*, a monthly magazine that served as the flagship publication of the Taliban insurgency after 2001 and (*d*) interviews in the various publications contained in the Taliban Sources Projects. These interviews typically contained a section in which the interviewee would describe his biographical background in detail. All together, these sources provided coverage of about three-quarters of the attributional records in the data set. A research assistant and I filled out the remainder through dozens of interviews with defected Taliban members, relatives of active Taliban members, tribal elders, Afghan government officials, and four insurgent commanders.

Finally, I investigated each individual's history with respect to the dependent variable: whether they defected after 2001. It is important, at the outset, to define "defection." Klandermans (2003) distinguishes between disengagement, or "passive defection," with "active defection." The former describes the case in which a movement participant simply ceases to participate in group activities, perhaps gradually or quietly. Active defection, on the other hand, usually requires an explicit break with the organization, through writing or some other public process. Similarly, Kalyvas (2006) disaggregates defection into "non-compliance," "informing," and "side-switching," the last of which is public. In the context of the Taliban, whose leadership after 2001 was based in Pakistan, some members gradually moved into retirement or lessened their activities. Reasons included age, injury, or other idiosyncratic factors; such individuals remained in Pakistan, sometimes continuing to interact regularly with active Taliban members. This type of "passive defection" is very different from the active defection of 59 members who explicitly (and publicly) allied with the Taliban's enemy, the U.S.-backed government of Afghanistan. Many of these side-switchers took up posts in this government; some became governors and MPs, and a few even ran for president. Many sat on the government-sanctioned High Peace Council, a Kabul-funded body meant to explore peace negotiations (or, according to its detractors, help legitimize the U.S.-backed administration). These are forms of "active" defection, and indeed some defectors have paid for their decision with their lives as they

fell victim to Taliban assassinations. Active defection is, effectively, a public show of support for the enemy. In this study I focus on active defection, as it will have more to tell us about group structure. Because active defection was a public act, it was not difficult to track down defectors and confirm their status.

Network Selection

As a formal movement, the Taliban emerged in 1994, but many of its members were veterans of the 1979-1989 anti-Soviet insurgency. They fought in local organizations and parties of various mujahedeen groups; of the 145 individuals in the data set, only 16 had no mujahedeen experience. Most switched groups at least once during the conflict (depending on where CIA-supplied guns and money were flowing), and some fought with three, four, or five groups. The shared memberships in mujahedeen groups created networks of affiliations. Similarly, a small number of individuals studied together in village mosques or served together on village councils.[37] Through these mujahedeen and village affiliations, I induced a 2-mode co-membership network that represents the network of affiliations of the Taliban movement at its inception in 1994.

Based on appointment records, I then time-coded each individual's career trajectory between 1994 and 2001. From this coding I induced a 2-mode co-membership network resulting from ministerial appointments and rotations. Combining this with the initial 1994 network gives the network of affiliations as of the 2001 overthrow. A tie in this network indicates that two individuals served together—either in the same ministry, mujahedeen group, or council, for at least one month.[38] Following the standard interpretation

[37] The line between village and mujahedeen membership was fluid; village groups sometimes took up arms without being a formal part of the mujahedeen. For this reason, I treat both as equivalent co-memberships. In this sense, both village propinquity and mujahedeen co-membership are the outcomes of agent-generated decisions.

[38] The results were not sensitive to different cut-off points between two and six months. Any cut-off point greater than six months appears to be theoretically arbitrary; any cut-off point less than one month would give an inaccurate picture of co-affiliations because out-going ministers and deputy ministers sometimes overlapped briefly with in-coming officials.

of affiliation networks (e.g., Bomhoff, 1967; Davis and Greve, 1997), a connection indicates either an underlying social tie or the structure through which such a tie develops.[39]

As I show below, structural positions in this network predicts post-2001 patterns of defection. A visual inspection of the networks suggests that rotations among the leadership produced co-affiliations and propelled many individuals into brokerage roles. To analyze this, we must measure the extent to which each member is a broker. A broker is an individual who connects others; she bridges holes in the social structure, such that she acts as the conduit for information, resources, or opportunities between unlinked individuals (Burt, 1992). Gould and Fernandez (1989) developed the standard approach to brokerage, but it is not appropriate for our data for at least two reasons. First, it depends on partitioning the social structure into disjoint groups, with brokers playing the role of linking between them. Here, we are interested in brokerage between individuals, not groups; although in principle each individual could be considered a group, it would diminish the analytical power of their method. Second, it was developed and is most clearly defined for binary networks. However, the 1-mode projection of a 2-mode network is valued, and dichotomizing the network to calculate brokerage scores risks losing valuable information about the social structure.

For these reasons, I develop here a measure of brokerage appropriate to the data and our theoretical concerns. I begin with Stovel and Shaw's (2012) insight that there is structural variation in the forms of brokerage. Specifically, a broker might be neutral if he occupies the same relative position with respect to the individuals he is brokering, and he might be biased if he is closer to one party or the other. This applies naturally in the case of valued networks, where we can distinguish different types of brokerage relations

based on relative tie strength. In Figure 1, *a* is a biased broker because she is more strongly tied to one party

[39] Because of the time-resolved data, it is possible to weight the ties with a decay function. However, we do not have similar time-resolved data for pre-1994 affiliations. For this reason, I opted to keep all affiliations as a dichotomous variable.

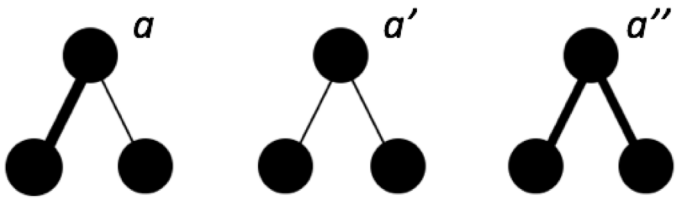


Figure 8 Biased and neutral brokerage

than the other, whereas *a'* and *a''* are neutral brokers. In the context of group cohesion, brokers bridge disparate actors to create the possibility of joint action or the diffusion of opportunity; to this end, any form of brokerage may be better than none, but it is reasonable to expect neutral brokerage to have a stronger effect on cohesion than biased brokerage.

To formalize this notion, let **C** be the *n* x *n* co-affiliation projection from the *n* x *m* matrix of actors and groups. Following the discussion of neutral and biased brokers, we define the partial brokerage score b_{ijk}^{*} as

$$b_{ijk}^{*} = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \dfrac{c_{ij}}{c_{jk}} \text{ if } c_{ij} \le c_{jk} \\ \dfrac{c_{jk}}{c_{ij}} \text{ if } c_{jk} < c_{ij} \end{array} \right\} \qquad (1)$$

for all i, k such that $c_{ik} = 0$ and $c_{ij}, c_{jk} \neq 0$. The total brokerage score for each node j in **C** is

$$b_j = \sum_{ik} b_{ijk}^{*}$$

For example, if j is jointly a member of one group with k and two groups with i, and i,k share no common group membership, then j has a partial brokerage score of 0.5. On the other hand, if j is jointly a member of two groups with k and two groups with i, and again i,k share no common group membership, then j's

score is 1.0. Equation (1) has the property of tending to zero as the difference in weighting between ties grows larger; the more biased a broker is, the less effective she is as a broker. Of course, the maximum possible brokerage *j* could provide, under the condition that all ties are weighted equally, is

$$b_j^{\max} = \frac{1}{2} v_j \left(v_j - 1 \right) \tag{2}$$

where v_j is the degree of node *j*.

Brokers provide cohesion, but they also introduce vulnerability: the more reliant a network is on brokerage, the more susceptible it becomes to breakdown in communication or joint action in the event that a broker leaves the network. To analyze this, we should shift from the ego-centered view to that of the alter. To begin, I denote any two-step path from *k* to *m*, such that *k* and *m* do not share an edge, as a *brokered pathway*. From the point of view of *k*, the more brokered pathways to *m* available, the more attenuated the effect of removing any particular broker will be. From the perspective of the overall network, the pathway redundancy covers vulnerability arising from gaps in the social structure. I therefore define the *exposure* of node *k* as the proportion of brokered pathways beginning in *k* that are not redundant. That is, exposure is expressed by the number of nodes reachable from *k* through a brokered pathway divided by the total number of brokered pathways from *k*.

The denominator of this quotient is the sum of the partial brokerage scores defined in (1) of each node traversed by a brokerage pathway from *k* to *m*. In the dichotomous case, this is simply the number of *k*-*m* brokers. The numerator is the two-step reach centrality $R_k^{(2)}$—the number of nodes two or fewer steps away—minus the degree centrality v_k. This gives the number of nodes exactly two steps away. The exposure of *k* is then:

$$E_k = \frac{R_k^{(2)} - v_k}{\sum_l b_{klm}^*} \tag{3}$$

where the sum ranges over all nodes l that broker k and m. The maximum exposure is one, when there is no redundancy in brokered pathways. On the other hand, exposure tends to zero as the level of redundancy grows large with respect to the structural holes. (See Appendix for a derivation of an alternate analytical expression for E_k that can be computed directly from **C**). By design, Eq. (3) handles valued data, so we can calculate exposure resulting from biased pathways; just as bias diminishes a broker's role, it renders the pathway along which the broker lies less capable of providing redundancy. Thus as bias increases, the sum in the denominator of (3) grows smaller, and exposure increases.

Before analyzing the role of brokerage in defection and network cohesion, I will first examine the data in light of prevailing theories of insurgency and the Taliban.

Ideology and Attributes: Alternate Theories of Taliban Recruitment and Defection

While most studies have not addressed Taliban leadership defection directly, many make the assumption that the same factors that propel someone to join the Taliban are at work in their decision to leave. These theories broadly fall into two categories. The first locates Taliban membership in attributes such as ethnicity or tribe. The core assumption is that social reality consists primarily of groups, with group membership and group interests dictating the choices that individuals make. The second approach focuses on the "ideological" aspect of membership. It postulates that leaders in the Taliban are bound together by a certain conception of political Islam, which is actualized through a system of meanings and normative commitments. Those who break from the movement do so because they differ in these commitments and understandings of political Islam. The core assumption here is that the movement consists of "moderates"

Table 7 – Variable Codings

Variable	Coding
Ethnicity	Coded 0 if non-Pashtun (including Baluchi, Pashayee, and Nuristani), 1 if Pashtun (including Sayed)
Tribe	Coded 0 if Durrani, 1 if non-Durrani (including Eastern Ghilzais, other Pashtuns, and non-Pashtuns)
Education	Coded 0 if educated outside Afghanistan (including Saudi Arabia and India), 1 if educated inside Afghanistan. In cases where individuals were educated in both, coded 0 if majority of education inside Afghanistan, 1 otherwise
Formal Position - Ideological Ministry	Coded 0 if individual served in the following government bodies: the Ministries of Vice and Virtue, Justice, Information and Culture, the Supreme Court, Mullah Omar's office, the Supreme Council; coded 1 otherwise
Formal Position - Inner Circle	Coded 0 if individual served in the following government bodies: the Ministries of Vice and Virtue, Justice, Defense, or Interior; the military; Mullah Omar's Office or the Supreme Council; coded 1 otherwise
Formal Position - Military	Coded 0 if the individual served in the armed forces (including the Ministry of Defense), 1 otherwise.

and "hardliners," and the former are much more likely to reconcile with the Afghan government, while the latter are likely to resist until death.[40] To test these propositions, I have used the coding scheme presented in Table 1.

Ethnicity and Tribe

Many scholars have commented on the intimate connection between Pashtun life and the Taliban (Rashid, 2002; Barfield, 2010; Sinno, 2008). It is well established that the Taliban are strongest in Pashtun communities, and some authors have even argued that the Taliban represent a form of Pashtun nationalism (Kamel, 2015). Some Taliban themselves speak of the current conflict as a "war against Pashtuns." A descriptive summary of the leadership data (Table 2) shows that the majority of the Taliban leadership are indeed Pashtuns. However, the χ^2-tests in Table 3 indicate that ethnicity is not a reliable predictor of whether an individual will defect or not. This reflects the fact that while the Taliban is a movement of Pashtuns, it

[40] A third theory, that Taliban recruitment is driven by grievances, is consistent with the findings in chapters 1 and 2. Those findings centered, however, on grievances among the Taliban's constituency. Here, however, we are focused on the Taliban leadership, and as I will show below, those who harbored grievances nonetheless sometimes defected.

is not a "Pashtun movement." Individuals do not set out to join a Pashtun-dominant group, but are constrained to do so through the contacts available to them in their social world. Elsewhere, I have shown that the Taliban's ethnic makeup is a consequence of networks of contact and trust; the ethnic trends emerged from a pattern of relations between individuals, not because ethnicity in Afghanistan is an *a priori* category that dictates action (Gopal, 2016).

Related to the ethnic view is one that postulates a particular tribal make-up of the Taliban leadership (e.g., Mili and Townsend, 2009). In the most popular version of this theory, according to one author, "The Taliban primarily consist of rural Pashtuns from the Ghilzai confederation, who have historically been at odds with the smaller Durrani tribes," (Grare, 2010). However, Table 2 shows an equitable distribution of Durrani and Ghilzai tribal confederation across the Taliban leadership, and in fact, Durranis are overrepresented compared to the population. Table 3 reports that there is no statistically significant association between tribe and defection; non-Ghilzais are not more likely to defect than any other group.

Ideology

In his exhaustive definitional analysis, Gerring (1997) identifies dozens of ways in which the concept of ideology is operationalized in the literature, many of which contradict each other. To avoid these problems, he argues for a context-specific definition of ideology. In this case, most authors who use the term with

Table 2 – Tribal and Ethnic Distribution of Taliban Leadership

Ethnicity	Total	Percent	Tribe	Total	Percent
Pashtun	116	80.00%	Total Durrani	37	25.52%
Total Non-Pashtun	16	11.03%	Zirak	21	14.48%
Tajik	10	6.90%	Panjpai	16	11.03%
Uzbek	3	2.07%	Sayed	5	3.45%
Hazara	0	0.00%	Ghilzai	40	27.59%
Pashayee	1	0.69%	Eastern Ghilzai	34	23.45%
Nuristani	1	0.69%	Unknown	13	8.97%
Baluch	1	0.69%	Non-Pashtun	16	11.03%
Unknown	13	8.97%			

Table 3 – Chi-squared tests of attributional and ideological variables

	ϕ	p
Ethnicity	-0.021	0.809
Tribe	-0.072	0.411
Education	-0.136	0.125
Inner Circle	-0.115	0.174
Ideological	-0.064	0.444
Military	-0.138	0.100

Note: ϕ is the mean-square contingency coefficient.

respect to the Taliban refer to a coherent system of ideas about political Islam, power, and the use of violence. Many scholars understand the Taliban to adhere to a rigid or literalist interpretation of their religion, exhibit a high degree of intolerance for other beliefs or practices, and harbor a conviction that the state should enforce this interpretation—all of which lead naturally to the use of armed violence to achieve these ends.

It is difficult to operationalize this definition directly, but we can construct proxy variables to study the relationship to defection. The implication of the ideological theories is that those individuals who defect

are "moderates" or, to use a concept from the social movement literature, are not "true believers" (Lalich, 2004). During Taliban-run Afghanistan, certain ministries and government bodies were seen to represent the "ideological core" of the Taliban (e.g., Cole, 2003): the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and the Promotion of Virtue, which contained the notorious whip-wielding religious police who forced women into their homes and monitored the length men's beards; the Ministry of Justice, which adjudicated disputes according to Sharia law, condemning adulterers to death by stoning and thieves to amputation; the Supreme Court and Mullah Omar's office, which issued *fatwas* and other religious rulings such as the demolition of the Buddha statues in 2000; and the Ministry of Information and Culture, which was responsible for the movement's propaganda. It is reasonable to examine whether membership in one of these offices or ministries is associated with defection; table 3 shows that it is not. Individuals who served in the Vice and Virtue or Justice ministries were not any more likely to defect than those in other formal positions.

Alternatively, we might consider the possibility that the hardliners were more likely to be found controlling the crucial levers of the state; these would include the ministries of defense and interior, the military, and Mullah Omar's office. It would also include the aforementioned Ministry of Vice and Virtue, as a number of commentators have identified it as a crucial arm of state power and internal control (Cole, 2003; Rashid, 2002). On this theory, hardliners are more likely to populate the regime's inner circle than the relatively peripheral institutions like the Afghan Red Crescent Society or the Ministry of Public Works. Table 3, however, indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between inner-circle membership and post-2001 defection.

Finally, a few commentators—including some Taliban themselves—suggest that the ideological division lies between political and military operatives. According to this theory, it was frontline commanders who, by risking their lives and conquering territory through the barrel of a gun, comprise the hardliners. Indeed, the human rights violations associated with the Taliban come largely from this group, not those who occupied political posts. Again, however, Table 3 shows no link between political membership and

defection. In general, we cannot predict post-2001 behavior from an individual's formal position in the 1990s regime.

The one remaining testable proposition regarding ideology is place of education. It has been the bedrock of scholarship and analysis of the Taliban that their ideology developed in "extremist" madrassas in Pakistani refugee camps during the 1980s anti-Soviet war. Ahmed Rashid (2002) provides perhaps the canonical statement in this vein:

> Many of [the Taliban] had been born in Pakistani refugee camps, educated in Pakistani *madrassas* and had learnt their fighting skills from Mujaheddin parties based in Pakistan. As such the younger Taliban barely knew their own country or history, but from their *madrassas* they learnt about the ideal Islamic society created by the Prophet Mohammed 1,400 years ago and this is what they wanted to emulate.

Many of these madrassas were funded by Saudi Arabia, giving them a distinctly hardline fundamentalist flavor. Peter Tomsen (2013) writes that

> "According to a Pakistani scholar, "these soldiers of God were crafted for one function alone—to kill the infidel communists or die trying, and view either outcome as the ultimate victory." Under the influence of Saudi money and Saudi preachers on the Frontier during the 1980s and 1990s, the Frontier madrassas adopted an increasingly militant anti-Shia, anti-Sufi, and anti-West line, manufacturing armed fanatics for the Mujahidin extremist parties and later the Taliban to fight in Afghanistan and also Kashmir."

While it may be the case that some Taliban foot soldiers studied in such madrassas, the record for the Taliban leadership is mixed. Table 4 shows that eighty-five individuals in the data set—at least 60 percent—studied inside Afghanistan, either in *hujras* (informal village-based boarding rooms attached to mosques), formal state-supported madrassas, or *maktabs* (secular schools). This group includes Mullah Omar, the supreme leader of the Taliban, and many other key ideologues in the movement. Forty-four individuals (at least 30 percent) studied at least partly in Pakistan, although the vast majority of these did so after the Russian withdrawal of 1989, not as refugees during the anti-Soviet war. (There is no information on

Table 4 – Taliban Leadership Education

Taliban Leadership Education	Total	Percent
Afghanistan - hujra	71	48.97%
Afghanistan - madrassa	11	7.59%
Afghanistan - maktab	3	2.07%
Pakistan - refugee camp	8	5.52%
Pakistan - madrassa	35	24.14%
Pakistan - secular	1	0.69%
India	2	1.38%
Saudi Arabia	1	0.69%
None	3	2.07%
Unknown	9	6.21%

educational background for nine individuals in the data set). In any event, if madrassas in Pakistan produce "extremists," then their graduates should be less likely to defect than those educated inside Afghanistan. However, Table 3 suggests no link between place of education and post-2001 defection.

These findings do not mean that ideology is irrelevant. All individuals engage in systems of meaning, develop normative commitments, actively interpret their circumstances, and respond in various ways to organizational framing. However, the findings suggest that the ways in which most researchers have described Taliban ideology do not map onto the prerogatives of the Taliban themselves, nor can they help predict who stays in the movement and who leaves.

Network Structure and Cohesion

The Taliban movement, which emerged in the southern province of Kandahar in 1994 and captured Kabul in 1996, consisted of at least five distinct groups. The first, and most important, was young religious students who fought against the Soviets in Kandahar and neighboring provinces. These groups operated

autonomously from, but allied to, the seven major mujahedeen parties. At the time, they were known as *taliban* (Pashto for "students") fronts. A member of one of these fronts later wrote,

> Even though a large number of common people took part in the *jihad* along the *[t]aliban*'s front, all had to follow the group's basic principles. Apart from dire emergencies during operations or enemy assaults, the *mujahedeen* were engaged in study. Senior… members would teach the younger [*taliban*], and the senior *Mawlawi* [cleric] would instruct other older *[t]aliban* members. In this way, a common and illiterate *mujahed* could become a *[t]alib* within two or three years. I carried out both duties on the front; I would learn from my instructor and I would teach others the basics of reading and writing. We all studied, and so I was able to continue my religious education. People who did not want to study went to fight under other commanders. Not all the fronts worked this in this manner, but we were *taliban* and this was our way. We wanted to stay clean, to avoid sinning, and to regulate our behaviour (Zaeef, 2010).

There were anywhere from one to two dozen *taliban* fronts in southern Afghanistan during the 1980s (Gopal and Strick van Linschoten, 2016). These fronts were usually tied to a particular location and commander, but individual *talibs* typically switched fronts at least once during the jihad. This created a network of co-affiliations among *talibs*, which would mobilize in 1994 to launch the Taliban movement.

As the Taliban spread from Kandahar and began conquering territory to the east, they absorbed two other mujahedeen movements. The first was a network of religious scholars who fought in the group *Harakat-e-Enqilabi Nabi*. These figures predominately hailed from central provinces like Logar, Kabul, and Parwan, and many had studied in leading Pakistani seminaries like the Dar ul-Uloom Haqqania. The second was a network of commanders and scholars from the mujahedeen group *Harakat-e-Enqilabi Mansur*. These individuals predominately hailed from the country's southeast, and many had studied at the famed Nur al-Madaris seminary in Andar, Ghazni. A fourth group to join the movement consisted of individuals too young to have fought in the anti-Soviet jihad, but studied in Pakistani madrassas and were members of student groups associated with the mujahedeen. The smallest component was the fifth group, assorted unaffiliated individuals who joined after watching the Taliban's stunning battlefield successes.

The result of these anti-Soviet jihad co-memberships is depicted as a one-mode transformation in Figure 2,

Figure 9 - 1994 Taliban Leadership Affiliation Network

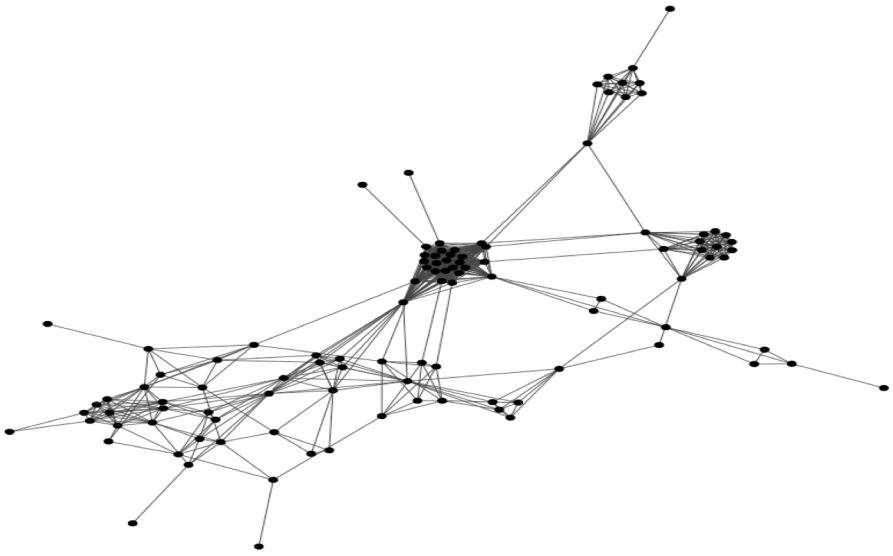
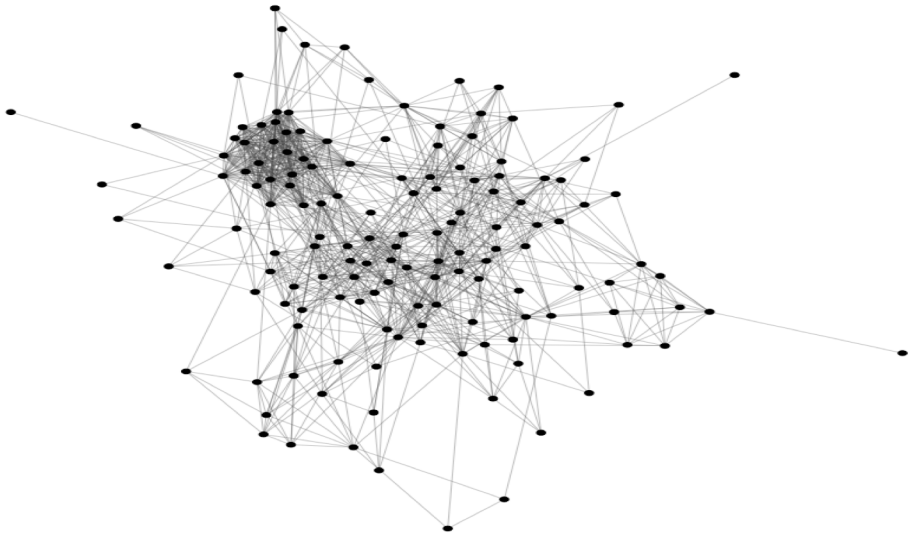


Figure 10 - 2001 Taliban Leadership Affiliation Network



which is the Taliban leadership network as of the movement's inception in 1994. We see a structure of dense cliques with few bridging ties, reflecting the disparate factions that came together to create the movement. This alliance structure posed a distinct challenge in building the movement; the seven major mujahedeen parties did not arise as an alliance of political groups, but rather grew from pre-existing networks through tribal and other kinship means. As the Taliban took control of the state, the problem of "horizontal" integration coupled with the more familiar Afghan problem of vertical integration. Supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar was keen to guard against appointed officials developing local power bases that might challenge the state, so he frequently rotated officials from one ministry to the next. The rotations in fact had little to do with expertise—not an issue anyway because almost no one in the Taliban government had any technical expertise in a field outside of law—but were instead expedient measures against the development of vertical social ties within state structures. In effect, this was a classic state building move aimed at ensuring that ownership of the means of administration remained with the state and not with the office holder. As a Taliban ideologue wrote at the time, "Posts and responsibilities should be rotated within an appropriate duration. No one should stay in a post so long as to become synonymous with that office" (Ludhviani, 2015).

In practice, rotations should be sensitive to temporal range. If they occur too often, appointees will lack sufficient time to conduct meaningful work, develop knowledge of ministerial procedures and routines, or forge the workplace collaborations necessary for effective administration. Rotations too infrequent, on the other hand, impede rationalization and institutionalization of administration. Table 5 lists the average tenure of ministers and deputy ministers (in months; similar figures occur in the judicial and military branches). Overall, ministers served in a given ministry on average for a little over two years, long enough for meaningful ties to develop with co-workers but not long enough to allow them to develop a power base. However, the spread of the data shows that Omar was only partially successful in this regard. He rotated certain key posts, such as the ambassadorship to Pakistan, and the foreign, finance, and interior ministries with high frequency. Other ministries associated with revenue generation, such as public works and

Table 5 — Mean Appointment Tenures in Taliban Ministries 1996-2001

	Minister	Deputy	Deputy Positions
Pakistan Embassy	11.0	66.0	1
Public Works	13.2	33.0	3
Foreign Affairs	16.5	22.0	6
Agriculture	22.0	16.5	2
Pilgrimage	22.0	22.0	2
Telecommunications	22.0	22.0	4
Finance	22.0	33.0	4
Planning	22.0	33.0	4
Interior	22.0	66.0	2
Mines and Industry	33.0	22.0	4
Public Health	33.0	22.0	2
Water and Power	33.0	22.0	3
Aviation	33.0	33.0	2
Information and Culture	33.0	33.0	4
Martyrs and Refugees	33.0	33.0	2
Rural Rehabilitation	33.0	33.0	1
Intelligence	33.0	33.0	2
Commerce	33.0	66.0	3
Education	33.0	66.0	3
Higher Education	33.0	66.0	4
Labor	33.0	66.0	1
Borders	66.0	22.0	4
Defense	66.0	33.0	2
Justice	66.0	33.0	2
Vice and Virtue	66.0	33.0	7
Tot Average	27.0	31.1	

Note: Figures are in months

telecommunications, also faced high turnover. However, of the four ministries with the lowest turnover rate, three (Vice and Virtue, Justice, and Defense) were pillars of regime power. If Omar did not remove ministers there, it was not for lack of trying. He was reportedly frequently at odds with the Justice and Vice and Virtue ministers in particular, because of their over-zealous interpretation of his dictates (which included whipping women on the street, a practice he reportedly opposed). However, both ministers had developed semi-independent power bases by virtue of their religious police, making their removal a sensitive political issue.

So instead, he employed other means as checks and balances. In the Vice and Virtue ministry, he multiplied the number of deputy posts until there was seven—all of whom could, theoretically, function as Omar's eyes in the ministry. Both defense and justice had the army and supreme court, respectively, as checks. (The border ministry was granted as a sinecure to a non-Taliban mujahedeen commander in a power-sharing deal).

In any event, the rotation of Taliban personnel helped create new ties between disparate parts of the movement. Figure 3 shows the one-mode projection of the Taliban network as of 2001, and Table 6 presents a comparison of the two networks. By 2001, the cliques are gone, replaced by a dense interlocking structure of a single component. The density has increased by nearly 60 percent, while the network has grown significantly more compact (measured as the mean of all reciprocal distances).

These changes point to the two most striking differences between the networks. First, the 2001 network contains no identifiable sub-groups except for a dense core and less dense periphery. This suggests that we might investigate whether an individual's structural position in terms of centrality is linked to their post-2001 behavior. Second, although network density has increased, the overall clustering coefficient has *decreased*. As the clustering coefficient measures the density of transitive triples—cases where *i* is linked to *j*, *j to k*, and *k* back to *i*—this suggests that the number of structural holes has increased. Structural holes

Table 6 — Comparison of 1994 and 2001 Taliban Networks

	1994	2001
Average Degree	9.559	15.021
Density	0.066	0.104
Components	22	1
Average Distance	3.257	2.370
Clustering	0.929	0.615
Compactness	0.222	0.471
Average Constraint	0.419	0.330
Valued Brokerage (mean)	7.875	51.105
Number of brokers	55	130
Mean Network Exposure	0.587	0.089

are gaps in the social structure, such as the social separation of alters in an ego network (Burt, 1992). Table 4 also reports a decrease in the mean constraint, a measure proposed by Burt to evaluate the extent to which an actor is constrained by those he or she is connected to. These changes are unusual, because the number of structural holes typically decrease as networks become denser (Burt, 2010); sparser networks, by virtue of having less connections between nodes, are more likely to contain more gaps.

A decrease in the number of components together with an increase in the number of gaps can only come about with an increase in brokerage—so this surprising result suggests that the rotations transformed many individuals into brokers. Using the concept of valued brokerage developed above (see Eqs. 1 and 2), we can compute the extent of brokerage in the two networks. Fifty-five individuals played a brokerage role in 1994, whereas 130—90 percent of the network—did so by 2001. Moreover, the average level of brokerage was quite low in 1994, meaning that individuals connected relatively few alters compared to 2001. In effect, the rotation strategy "decentralized" brokerage; nearly every member of the Taliban leadership came to play a bridging role (Figure 4). With so many brokers, individuals had multiple brokered pathways with which to reach others. Thus the mean network exposure (eq 3) dropped significantly from 1994 to 2001, even as the number of structural holes increased (Table 5). In other words, the redundancy of pathways ensured that the removal of a broker did not necessarily isolate individuals; it was this fact that lent the

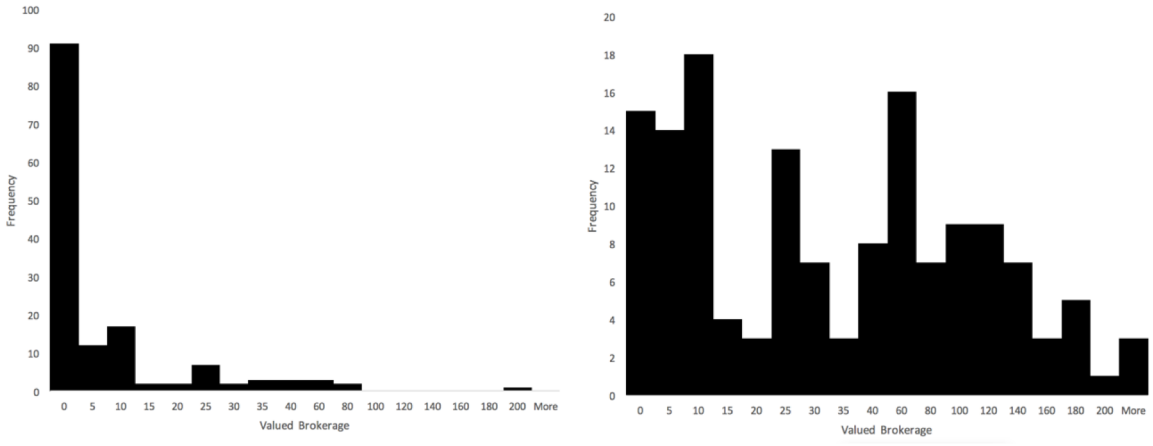


Figure 4 Frequency Distribution of Brokerage in 1994 (left) and 2001 (right)

movement its structural cohesion.

Defection and Network Embeddedness

By 2006, nearly a third of the 1990s-era Taliban leadership had successfully switched sides by joining the Afghan government some capacity. This occurred even as their former colleagues began reorganizing to fight against the Americans and the Afghan state. Joining Kabul under these circumstances, therefore, was an act of active defection. In light of the way in which the Taliban leadership network was vertically integrated, this section examines the influence of an individual's structural position in that network on his post-2001 behavior. Table 7 presents the results of a logistic regression on various relational and attributional covariates. The dependent variable is coded "1" if the individual defected to the Afghan government, and "0" if he did not.

Model 1 shows that an individual's brokerage score (calculated according to Eq. 1) is a strong indicator of his likelihood to defect; because the log odds are less than one, he is less likely to defect the higher his brokerage score is. Since brokerage scores in this data range from 0 to 285.5, an increase in one point has a small effect on likelihoods. Over larger differences, however, the effect is substantial. Relative to a non-

Table 7 — Logistic Regression Coefficients of Defection

	Model					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Brokerage	0.982** (0.005)					
Centrality	.....	0.932** (0.020)		0.932** (0.020)	0.954* (0.021)	0.945* (0.022)
Brokerage (Normalized)	.....		0.153* (0.867)	0.140* (0.921)	0.138 (1.044)	0.116* (1.067)
Education	.....				1.741 (0.425)	1.964 (0.437)
Military service	.....					2.936† (0.589)
Nagelkerke R^2	0.184	0.132	0.045	0.172	0.109	0.145

Note: Exponential coefficients.
**$p < 0.01$
*$p < 0.05$
†$p < 0.10$

broker, an individual with a score one standard deviation greater—which, in this case, is close to the mean brokerage—will remain in the movement with a nearly 67 percent probability. An individual with a score two standard deviations higher has a nearly 85 percent probability of remaining.

An individual's centrality in the network is also a strong predictor of his decision. Because various centrality measures tend to be correlated (e.g., Valente et al., 2008), I focus here on degree centrality, as its theoretical interpretation in this case is the most straightforward. An increase in an individual's degree centrality corresponds to a decrease in the likelihood of defection. The mean degree centrality is 16.3, with a standard deviation of 10.1. An individual with a centrality of 10 has a roughly 50 percent chance of defecting, but for a centrality of 20 that figure drops to 34 percent. A member with a centrality of 30 will remain in the movement with a probability of 80 percent.

These results make it clear that the more embedded an individual is in the leadership network—in terms of

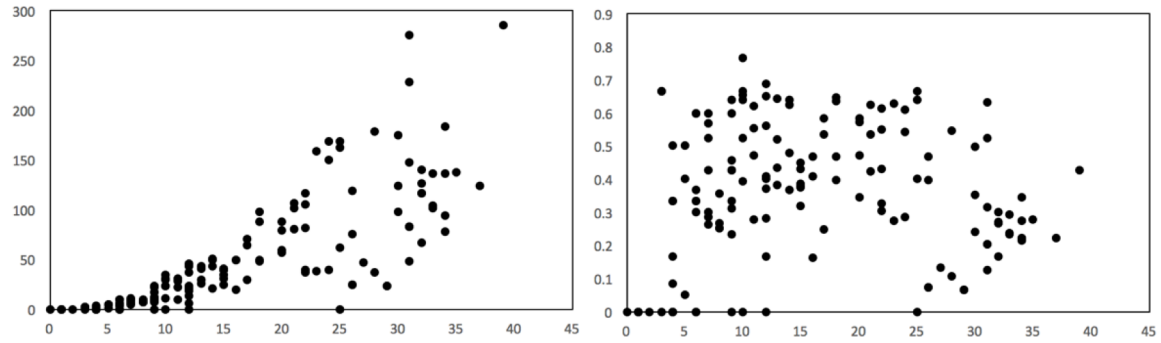


Figure 11 Scatter Plots of Brokerage (left) and Normalized Brokerage (right) vs Degree

the number and strength of his working relationships with others, or his position as a broker—the less likely he is to defect. Before combining degree and brokerage into a single model, however, we should be careful to avoid collinearity. In general, greater centrality means more brokerage opportunities. While brokerage is not linearly related to degree centrality, both depend on the number of alters in the ego network. Assuming that the collinearity is structural and not observation-based, one approach to deal with this issue is to mean-center the predictor variables. However, recent work has suggested that this will not, in fact, eliminate collinearity (Echambadi and Hess, 2007). Instead, note that brokerage opportunities depend on the pairwise coupling of alters. This suggests that, as an approximation, the link between brokerage and degree can be expressed as

$$b_j \approx f(v_j^{\,2}) - \varepsilon(\sum_k v_k) \qquad (4)$$

where v_j is the degree of node j. That is, the brokerage can be expressed as some function of the pairwise coupling of alters minus an "error" term that is a function of the degree of each alter k (which is related to how many of those alters are themselves linked). When the variation in degree is small, such as this case, and we treat the degree terms in (4) as averages, then as an approximation we can assume the expression takes a form similar to Eq. 2, the maximum possible brokerage. The allows us to normalize the brokerage scores, which has the theoretical significance of representing the brokerage values relative to what the

structure of the network can bear, and the practical effect of eliminating the collinearity (Figure 5 depicts the scatter plots of the un-normalized and normalized brokerage scores; the un-normalized version clearly shows the dependence on the square of the number of nodes connected to *j*).

Table 7 presents further evidence that normalized brokerage and degree centrality are unlikely to be collinear, because adding predictors to Model 3 do not significantly change the regression coefficients. For Model 4, an individual with a normalized brokerage score of 0.4, about two standard-deviations above the minimum, has a 60 percent chance of remaining in the movement (holding centrality constant). An individual with a score of around 0.6 has about a 65 percent chance of doing so.

The χ^2-tests in Table 3 indicate that while there are no statistically significant associations between the attribute variables and defection, the two most likely to show an effect are the place of education and whether an individual played a military or civilian role in the Taliban government. Incorporating these variables into the model, however, does not improve accuracy or predictability.

Addressing Endogeneity

The strong link between brokerage, centrality, and defection undermines both the attributional and ideological explanations of post-2001 Taliban decision-making. However, for ideology the threat of endogeneity still looms: is it possible that an individual's structural position itself reflects his ideological commitment? Those with low brokerage or centrality scores may also be less committed—especially if commitment is linked to rotation. While it is impossible to completely eliminate this possibility, a number of reasons suggest that this is not the case.

First, while attendance of a Pakistani madrassa does not predict decreased likelihood of defection, it is

linked to membership in the most "ideological" state institutions, like the Vice and Virtue ministry. There, 67 percent of officials studied in Pakistan, including its longtime minister Muhammad Wali. Across all "ideological" institutions, 50 percent studied in Pakistani madrassas, compared to only 29 percent of the Taliban leadership overall. These institutions, and Vice and Virtue in particular, were seen by many living under Taliban rule as populated by ideological hardliners. Crews and Tarzi (2009) write

> For the residents of Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-e Sharif, the zealous personnel of this ministry represented the face of the Taliban order. They patrolled the streets armed with whips, radio antennas, and Kalashnikovs searching for violators of Taliban rules regarding mosque attendance, dress, music, and other matters of public decorum over which they asserted clerical authority.

This suggests that education may indeed proxy, to some extent, one's ideological position.

Second, it appears that Mullah Omar weighed a number of different factors in his logic of rotation, with the priority being the exigencies of state building, not ideological purity. Omar exercised control over how often and where someone was rotated. It is clear from its nature that brokerage, which depends both on an ego's embeddedness and the connectivity of alters, is not related in a straightforward way to the frequency of rotation. Brokerage therefore might be understood as epiphenomenal to rotation strategy. The case of degree centrality is less straightforward. To begin with, note that there is no statistically significant link between place of education and the frequency of rotation ($p = 0.530$). In addition, the variation in ministry size was small at the leadership level (a mean of 3.8 posts per ministry, with a standard deviation of 1.5).

The nature of Taliban rule was such that—as with any state building effort—factors promoting centralization and loyalty to the ruler trumped those factors that outsiders may deem "ideological." Foremost was tribal balance; when he learned that the Ministry of Civil Aviation was disproportionately from the Ishaqzai tribe, Omar rotated certain members away. When figures like the Minsters of Justice and Vice and Virtue threatened to develop semi-independent power bases by virtue of their control of the religious police, Omar multiplied deputy positions and filled them with those he trusted. In some cases, as

with the Foreign Ministry, he dispatched members of his office to serve as deputies; this proved a useful check on the ministry amid mounting pressure from the United States and the United Nations to surrender Osama bin Laden.

Of course, Omar likely interpreted these moves as part of what he saw as the larger goal of constructing an Islamic state. However, moves of this sort are common to *any* successful state building process, by the very nature of the demands of internal rule. One key motivation of rotation is to induce loyalty to the center and break potential blocs forming in the periphery; it follows then that those Omar trusted less were more likely to be rotated. Further evidence for this proposition comes from the first leadership council of the Taliban insurgency, decreed by Omar in 2003, during a time when the movement was making tentative steps toward regrouping ("Taliban chief appoints," 2003).[41] Taliban members were scattered far and wide, and many were in hiding. In this perilous moment, the ten-man council might be seen as comprising some of Omar's most trusted associates. Seven of the ten had fought in *taliban* fronts in the 1980s—two in Mullah Omar's own front—and eight hailed from the greater Kandahar area. Remarkably, not one of the ten individuals was rotated a single time during the 1990s government.[42]

Even with these comments, we cannot completely rule out endogeneity.[43] However, by decoupling

[41] The council comprised of: Mullah Beradar (Popalzai, from Deh Rawud, Uruzgan, ex-deputy defense minister); Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansur (Ishaqzai, from Maiwand, Kandahar, ex-civil aviation minister); Mullah Dadullah (Kakar, from Char Chino, Uruzgan, ex-military commander); Mullah AKhtar Muhammad Osmani (Ishaqzai, from Sangin, Helmand, ex-military commander); Mullah Obaidullah (Alikozai, from Panjwayi, Kandahar, ex-defense minister); Jalaluddin Haqqani (Zadran, from Gerda Tseray, Khost, ex-borders and tribal affairs minister); Saif ur-Rahman Mansur (Andar, from Zurmat, Paktia, ex-military commander); Mullah Abdul Razaq (Achekzai, from Spin Boldak, Kandahar, ex-interior minister); Hafiz Majid (Noorzai, Panjwayi, ex-Kandahar Chief of Police); Mullah Muhammad Rasul (Noorzai, Spin Boldak, Kandahar, ex-governor of Nimroz province). The last two fought alongside Mullah Omar during the anti-Soviet jihad.

[42] In fact, the list was also an outreach effort between core Kandahari Taliban and two outsiders, Jalaluddin Haqqani and Saif ur-Rahman Mansur, who had no organic link to the Taliban but were engaged in their own resistance against U.S. forces.

[43] Another area where endogeneity may lurk is in the pre-1994 network (Figure 2). While there are pitfalls in extrapolating 1980s ideological positions into 1990s commitment, it is possible that individuals of similar ideological positions clustered together (such as, for example, by joining the same mujahedeen groups). If this is true, then it may mean that individuals who were less connected to the network exhibited ideological commitment different from those who were clustered. There are two reasons, however, to cast doubt on this possibility. First, it turns out that lower centrality scores in the 1994 network are not linked to lower scores in the 2001 network—such was the volume and efficiency of rotations. Second, lower centrality scores in 1994 positively correlates with education outside of Afghanistan—understandably so, because individuals with more ties were busy fighting in one of the mujahedeen groups, not studying in Pakistan.

structural position from easily-observed ideological proxies we can increase our degree of belief in rejecting the ideological hypothesis. Still, if there is indeed a link between centrality, brokerage, and defection, what is the causal mechanism? To explore this, we must investigate how defectors themselves understand their actions.

Narratives of Defection

The United States invaded in October of 2001 and succeeded in toppling the Taliban in just two months. For many members, the rapid downfall of their movement was catastrophic, prompting soul-searching despair. One individual, a former deputy minister, said

> My father, brother, and family were at Mansehra [a town in northwestern Pakistan home to several Afghan refugee camps]. But I realized it wouldn't be wise to move in with them. Too many people knew who I was, and some had no love for the Taliban. Instead I found a place to stay at a mosque nearby. I had to sneak over at midnight just to see my kids, like a thief. When I was visiting my daughter one night, she asked me about our Kabul home, why we didn't have a car anymore. She complained that it was too hot in the refugee camp, and that she wanted to move back to the cool climate of Kabul. I couldn't answer her. But she could tell from my eyes how sad I was. I was a wreck—nervous, worried, almost panic-stricken. (Yousafzai, 2009).

Under these circumstances, nearly the entire Taliban leadership attempted to surrender, switch sides, or simply retire from politics (Gopal, 2012). During 2002 and 2003, these attempts were mostly rebuffed, as Talibs were hunted by Afghan warlords eager to collect substantial bounties and cement their relationship with American patrons (see chapters 1 and 2). Most Talibs responded by fleeing across the border to Pakistan; only a handful who had pre-existing ties to important figures in the new state remained behind. By 2005, those who fled had reconstituted themselves as an insurgency—and now, with the threat of armed defiance to the state all too real, Washington and Kabul reversed course and began welcoming defections and surrenders. In this context, a steady trickle of Taliban leaders began to reconcile, and some took up official government positions. By 2007, close to a third of the 1990s leadership had switched sides.

In interviewing these defectors, we should take care to be cognizant of the endogeneity of ideology to civil wars (Kaylvas, 2006). In particular, an individual's *ex-post facto* explanation of his decisions may not accurately reflect his original motivation, especially under conditions of fragmented, contested, or unsettled political control. So instead, I adopt the strategy of engaging the interviewees in a narrative reconstruction of *how* they defected as opposed to simply focusing on why they defected. The hope is that by examining the form of one's defection, we might help elucidate its content (Bearman and Stovel, 2000).

SE1 was a minister of an "ideological" ministry and a deputy minister in a "practical" ministry (see codings in Table 1).[44] Shortly after the fall of the Taliban, he fled to the Pakistani city of Peshawar.

> In the beginning, I was in touch with my friends. We sent a message to a newspaper and told them that we are declaring support for Hamid Karzai. They published this, but nothing happened. We heard that the government was threatening to arrest us anyway. So I stayed quiet and hidden for two years. Those were terrible years because I was not with my family.

During this time, he had little contact with other Taliban members. A handful of instances, he remembers, he reached out to comrades through trusted intermediaries. In the leadership network, SE1 is about 50th percentile in degree but only in the 25th percentile in brokerage. This is reflected in his admission that other members rarely sought him out during those troubled times as an intermediary.

SE2 told a similar story. He had served as a deputy minister in a practical ministry, and fled to the Pakistani tribal region of North Waziristan after the Taliban's fall.

> The Pakistanis tried to arrest me by raiding the guest house in Miran Shah, so I fled back to Afghanistan. But Pacha Khan Zadran [a U.S.-backed warlord] was in power at the time and he saw

[44] To protect anonymity, I use the following code for interviewees: XN, where X refers to their region of origin (S = South, SE = Southeast, N = North/Northwest, NE = Northeast) and N refers to a randomly assigned number.

> dollars whenever a Talib crossed his path. Everything was upside down. The jackals were now doing the hunting. So I fled to Peshawar and stayed quiet.

From there, he too he had little contact with other members.

> I knew everyone [in the Taliban], I even knew Mullah Omar. But the people from Kandahar are different, and I did not have strong connections with them. During the Taliban time I just did my work because I wanted to serve my country.

SE2 is only at the 40th percentile in degree, and the bottom third in brokerage. He attributes his lack of ties to a regional difference, although a more likely explanation based on the data is simply that he was not rotated from his ministry to serve in other government offices, an experience which would have given him more ties with those from other parts of the country.

Both SE1 and SE2 were from political networks distinct from the core *taliban* group that started the movement. The military commander S1, however, was linked to the original group through his superior. After the fall he returned to his native Helmand province, where he spent a few months in his village.

> During those years [American-backed warlords] Abdul Rahman Jan and Sher Muhammad Akhundzada had the power. They could do anything and no one could say a word. Their men came to my village and demanded taxes, and they beat the elders. They tried to arrest me but I escaped. I stayed for two weeks in the mountains and then I went to Nimroz and then Pakistan.

He stayed in Pakistan for nearly five years. During that time, he lived with his family and was rarely in touch with other members.

> Sometimes on the street in Pashtunabad [a Pashtun neighborhood in the Pakistani city of Quetta] I would go shopping and see a big minister from the Taliban days. We would say hello and shake hands but we would keep going. Other than that no, I didn't see anyone. Once, after the fighting started, Mullah Obaidullah [ex-Taliban defense minister] called me and asked me to do jihad. But I said I have to think about this because our life is difficult.

S1 is in the bottom 1 percent in degree centrality and brokerage. S2 also had historic links to the *taliban*

core, fighting in a *taliban* group during the anti-Soviet jihad. He too was a military commander, and had the unique experience of being in the room when the Taliban leadership made the decision to surrender.

> We were gathered in a house in Kandahar and everyone was making arguments about what to do. Mullah Beradar spoke, and Mullah Obaidullah and Mullah Abdul Razzaq. Mullah Omar just sat and listened to everyone quietly. Finally he told them, 'You should do what you like, you should protect yourself. But don't try to contact me anymore.' After that he disappeared and we never saw him again. From that moment, everyone decided to save himself. I went back to Zabul and stayed with my relatives. But when Hamidullah Tokhi and other warlords came I faced too many difficulties and moved to Pakistan.

S2 could not recall meeting another Taliban leader for almost a year. He explains, "I knew everyone but I was not very close with them. I was fighting from the jihad time until now so I know everyone in Afghanistan. This is our culture to know everyone." S2 did not stay long in Pakistan, however, because he feared the authorities and returned to Afghanistan. Like the others, S2 ranks low in degree and brokerage (26^{th} percentile in both).

The four individuals had different pre-2001 histories but all were forced to flee in 2002. All had grievances against the Americans and the new regime; SE2, for example, said

> I was watching what was happening in the country. This is why today I am working for peace. The problem is that there are too many hands, and everyone has an interest. American is here for its own interest and Pakistan is doing the same. Our government is corrupt and sending money to Dubai. The Americans brought warlords with them.

But grievances did not necessarily translate into resistance because they had pessimistic beliefs about the *outcome* of resistance. S1 said

> I fought ten years against the Russians. I am ready to defend my country and my religion. But right now is not the right time. This is a time for building our country. We had too much war. I saw the Americans and the warlords and knew that if we fought then it would be twenty years more of war. I knew that America and Pakistan would not give us peace.

SE1 recalled, "Every day I was talking to my wife's brother and we were looking at the situation. I know some people were talking about jihad but I knew it was impossible."

One individual, a mid-level Taliban commander who joined the insurgency (who is not part of this data set), explained that

> In the beginning I never dreamed we could fight the Americans. We knew they were the strongest army in the world. But every day [a local Taliban recruiter] was convincing us it was possible. He told us, 'Look at the Russians. They were the greatest country in the world, and the whole world was supporting Communism, but we Afghans only had our *naan* bread and God.

This suggests a crucial distinction between those who defected and those who fought—the appraisal of the chance of success. Many of the defectors I interviewed mentioned their pessimistic assessment during the difficult period of 2002-5. For example, SE3, an ex-minister, said

> Sure, I was angry [at the warlordism] but I thought it would be crazy to fight. It was not like the [anti-Soviet] jihad when the whole country fought as one. Now we have too many nations [ethnicities] in Afghanistan and everyone is for themselves. The foreigners are too powerful.

Similarly, SE4, an ex-deputy minister, said

> We saw what happened in 2001. No one came to support the Taliban and soon it was destroyed. We did not want more destruction. I knew that it would be impossible to resist the Americans, and I have learned that fighting is not a solution to our problems.

Not a single interviewee described a process of "conversion," where he came to believe that the Taliban's doctrine was false, before defecting. A few mentioned the realization that "fighting was not the answer," or that "Afghanistan should be at peace," but those were strategic assessments—as made clear by the comments of N1, a deputy minister the Vice and Virtue ministry, one of the most ideological in the Taliban government.

> Today there is obscenity on television. This is the reason the Taliban wanted to regulate it. If there is lewd behavior and images that are an affront to our culture, it is our duty to address the problem. If you see the television now, there is lewdness and Indian films, which encourage sinful behavior. This is a failure of our government and we must fix it.

When asked how, he argued that it should be done through the parliament, and by a public campaign to convince Afghans—not through violence.

The key difference between those who defected and those who did not was their risk assessment—whether resisting the government could be possible, and whether they would survive it. There is evidence, however, that humans generally exhibit poor capability of assessing risk (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974)—a calculation all the more difficult in the 2001-2004 context. Effectively, during this period the Afghan government and the Taliban were two weak organizations, each posing a collective-action problem to its potential adherents. Taking this view in conjunction with the finding that members of low centrality and low brokerage are more likely to defect suggests a possible explanation for how the calculation unfolded in practice: individuals with greater solidarity ties to the organization were more willing to believe, or were more easily convinced, of the possibility of resistance.

Fully testing this proposition would require more interviews with active insurgents. Still, although only four insurgent commanders were interviewed for this study, three spoke of initially harboring serious doubts—similar to the defectors—at the efficacy of armed resistance. Each of these three were eventually convinced to the contrary by peers. Another possible mechanism is the sort of selection bias well established in peer studies, where an individual's risk assessment is calibrated to those around him. Either way, a number of studies have suggested that at the outset people often underestimate the length of civil wars and assume that a conflict will not be nearly as protracted or bloody as it turns out (Kerklivet, 1977; Binford, 1996). The results here indicate that this misappraisal is at least in part a function of embeddedness in peer networks.

Individuals who lacked sufficient solidarity ties to convince them of the efficacy of resistance did not merely disengage, silently dissolving into the surrounding social structure. Instead, individuals not only defect *from* a group, but *into* other groups and organizations. In this case, that other organization was, ultimately, the Afghan government. But initially, it was trusted outsiders—usually belonging to neither the Taliban or the Afghan government—who brokered the defection process. SE1 explained that

> For a long time I did not know what to do. But when [a local tribal elder] visited my house in Pakistan, he told me it was possible to return to Afghanistan. I wanted a guarantee for my safety and that I would not be arrested. He went back to Kabul and returned with his word. It was on his honor that I returned.

The tribal elder, who is from the same tribe as SE1, visited as part of his own initiative to bolster reconciliation. In the case of SE4, who was also lying low in Peshawar, it was a visit from a friend in *Khudam ul-Furqan*, an old pre-jihad era political network, that pushed him to take the step of returning. S3, an ex-military commander, explained

> After the fall of the Taliban government I went home to my village. I made a meeting with Mullah Naqib (a prominent unaligned warlord-tribal elder in his area) and he guaranteed my safety. So I stayed home, but the Americans came and raided my house two, three times.

He was eventually sent to the U.S. prison at the Bagram Air Field, but tribal elders agitated for his freedom. Upon his release over a year later, S3 still did not join the insurgency as many others in his shoes did; instead, he secured a new pledge from local tribal elders working with the Americans, and he was not bothered after that. S3 was in the bottom third percentile in degree centrality, and he was among the ten percent of the leadership who did not play a brokerage role at all. These facts may help explain why, despite immense hardship, he did not join the insurgency. He himself explained it this way:

> I do not want to fight. This is a time for peace. I was never in the Taliban, I only fought with them. Really I was a *mujahed* and after defeating the Soviets I wanted to defeat warlordism and bring peace to Afghanistan. Today also I want to bring peace to Afghanistan, only through a different means.

The claim that he was never in the Taliban is patently false, but it represents the way he has reconstructed his identity to better align with his strategic and political choices. When I asked SE2, the ex-minister, what he made of ongoing peace initiatives towards the Taliban, he replied:

> You should know that I was never in the Taliban. I am not a Talib. Please write this down. Everyone who comes here sees my turban and thinks I am a Talib.
>
> Q: But you were in the Taliban government. What was your role?
>
> Yes I was in the government, but I was not a Talib. I am with Harakat-e-Enqilabi Mansur. We have fought since the early days of the jihad, and we joined the Taliban government as partners. But we were always independent.

This same minister, however, appeared numerous times in Taliban publications of the 1990s explaining Taliban views, speaking in one press conference as a "proud member and advisor" of the "Islamic Taliban movement." It would be wrong to think that he is now being misleading; instead, he has reconstructed his political identity by reverting to one that existed before the Taliban movement emerged.

In this way, most of the interviewees rejected the Talib identity during the interview, and many denied *ever* having been a true member. Instead, they have reconceived themselves as primarily belonging to a particular tribe working to solve the problems of their fellow tribesmen, or as a member of the Afghan government working in service of their country. One interesting exception to this trend is the case of Mullah Abdul Salaam Zaeef, ex-ambassador to Pakistan, who was sent to Guantanamo. He writes in his memoir that when authorities attempted to make him sign a statement confessing to be a member of the Taliban and al Qaeda, he replied, "I was a Talib, I am a Talib and I will always be a Talib, but I have never been part of Al Qaeda!" After Zaeef was repatriated to Afghanistan, he continued to call himself a Talib. But this may be the exception that proves the rule: he was close to the 70th percentile in brokerage, and his reconciliation likely was a reflection of the unique circumstances under which he was captured and then released from Guantanamo.

The point of this interrogation of identity is to highlight the endogenous shift in ideology as individuals switch sides. Contrary to the popular perception that ideology influences decisions to fight or reconcile, in this case it is the *decision to switch* that influenced the ideology. A case in point is SE5, minister and deputy minister of various ministries including the Vice and Virtue religious police. When asked about his views on the more punitive measures of religious law, such as amputating hands or stoning adulterers, he replied,

> These things are not correct for our society. We should work to raise our children in the right way, so that they do not commit adultery or other sins. But everything must be done through persuasion. I am not an extremist, and I am against extremism. I want development for our country. Those Taliban who wanted to do public stonings, they were cruel and wrong. It is not the right way.

In 1997, however, after a couple were publicly stoned in Kandahar, he told a foreign journalist, "Just two people, that's all, and we ended adultery in Kandahar forever… Even 100,000 police could not have the effect that we achieved with one punishment of this kind" (Burns, 1997)[45].

Conclusion

This chapter shows that a Taliban member's position on an ideological spectrum—to the extent that this might be captured through proxy variables like place of education, and through *ex-post-facto* interviews—is a poor predictor of his decision to fight or defect after 2001. This does not mean, however, that the Taliban are somehow uniquely pragmatic among rebel groups or Islamist movements. In their study of al-Qaeda in Iraq, the forerunner to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Johnston et al. (2015) found that the group often acted similarly to a firm, even at the cost of betraying its political platform. For example, while the

[45] The endogeneity problem lurks here as well. While focusing on individual's narratives of defection as opposed to asking them to explain why they defected can guard against some forms of conscious or unintentional misremembering, even the narratives themselves might be self-serving misremembrances. An individual may choose to highlight certain connections he leveraged to defect while downplaying others, for example. I tried to minimize this possibility by checking their defection sequence with other sources when possible.

base salaries of fighters were lower than those available in the licit economy, the organization compensated its members at different rates through various non-salary means (such as subsidizing rent)—thereby contradicting its stated aim of egalitarian payments. The organization did so because, like any firm, it had to balance attracting talented workers, motivating its employees, and maintaining morale, with its overall mission (making profits in the case of the firm, capturing and maintaining state power for ISIS).

This is not to say, however, that ideology or normative commitments play no role. Instead, it highlights that ideology can be endogenous to civil war. This crucial point, first formulated by Kalyvas (2006), has not received sufficient attention in popular accounts of modern-day insurgency, studies of terrorism, or in social movement research. For example, in the language of framing literature (e.g., Snow et al., 1986; Bedford and Snow, 2000), the Taliban framed the invasion and subsequent U.S.-backed campaign, which killed many innocents, as an anti-Muslim, anti-Afghan imperialist crusade, whereas the Afghan government and the Americans framed it as unfortunate mistakes in an otherwise well-meaning effort to bring justice and opportunity to the country. Either way, this approach emphasizes those doing the framing, and on which frame will best resonate with or transform pre-existing ideas. The implication is that an individual's beliefs are relatively static except to the extent that the social movement organization can induce a "frame transformation" or conversion. Oliver and Johnston (2000) write that the "beliefs of the targets of these efforts are… viewed [in the framing literature] as relatively fixed, with framers merely putting the right 'spin' on their issue to tap into these fixed preconceptions." Similarly, in much of the terrorism literature, ideology is seen as fixed in time, and variation in behavior within a group is understood as reflecting underlying variation in ideological commitment; in this case, a movement such as the Taliban might be grouped into "moderates" and "extremists," the former being mere opportunists and the latter "true believers."

Instead, my focus here on the presumed subjects of the framing processes emphasizes the dynamic nature of ideology. Eagleton (1991) writes that ideology consists of a "complex of empirical and normative

elements, within which the nature and organization of the former is ultimately determined by the latter." Similarly, Olivier and Johnston (2000) offer a definition of ideology as a "system of meaning that couples assertions and theories about the nature of social life with values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting social change." Viewed in this light, ideology is a processual, interpretive act—as opposed to a program or doctrine that an individual simply "reads off" to determine the ends of a social action. Of course, there are cases where ideology seems to operate on the ends and not just means. But war is the clearest example of the fact that individuals act in this "programmatic" way to a degree inversely proportional to the stakes of doing so. This point is often missed because individuals themselves describe their ends in ideological terms. For instance, the Taliban's stated *raison d'être* in the mid 1990s was to create an Islamic state, and in the mid 2000's was to wage jihad to reinstitute an Islamic state. Seen in a different light, however, their ends are far more quotidian: in 1994, to create a state in order to end anarchy and civil war, and after 2001, to create a state (or system) that would protect against the perceived predations of the new elite. These ends are shared by many groups and at many moments throughout history; what differs from case to case are not the ends but the means: the strategies of action (including the repertoires of contention), the meaning imputed to these means, and the idiom that develops around them. It follows then that when individuals feel those means may be achieved in a manner different from that which they had previously been committed, and that it may be beneficial to do so, they may shift their strategies of action and the ideological idiom around it.

The previous section suggested that this process was at work in Taliban members who upheld the (Taliban) status quo in the 1990s and now parrot Western and Afghan government norms. It would be wrong to assume that these individuals are being duplicitously opportunistic, or that they had simply shed their ideology and become pragmatic. Some ex-Taliban have been gunned down by their former comrades, and the threat of assassination looms over every defector. Their convictions in an ideology congruent with Western norms is the result of a shift in the means through which they pursue ends. The shift itself is the result of real historical pressures—material, organizational, structural, and perhaps most importantly, sheer

survivability, especially if they believe that aligning with the government gives better odds than joining the insurgency.

There are also examples of shifts in the opposite direction. Following a traditional interpretation of Islam, the Taliban had long viewed suicide as immoral. By the mid-2000's, however, the movement faced the pressure of waging an asymmetric war, and many watched Iraqi insurgents make devastating use of suicide bombing. This prompted a few Taliban commanders to deploy the tactic, causing much consternation among the leadership—supreme leader Mullah Omar was reportedly horrified, and a number of leading Taliban-aligned religious clerics considered issuing a *fatwa* against it. But the tactic proved too useful to prohibit—especially when facing the most advanced military in the world—and by 2006 the movement was making a virtue of necessity. Often, there was scant evidence and strained reasoning to support this position; the following passage, from a Taliban publication, is an example of such intellectual contortions (Mukhlis, 2014):

> Abu Dardaa tells that the Prophet said, "God loves three kind of persons and gives them the auger of success. First: when someone's comrades flee the battle but he stays back and continues to fight against the enemy. God will help and protect him from the enemy, or he will become a martyr. All will admire his patience. Second: Suppose a man has a beautiful wife and a comfortable bed, but in the middle of the night he gets up and worships God and does not bother about lust and sleeping. Third: Suppose there is a man who travels with a group of other travelers, and after covering a long distance they find a place and sleep. But while the rest are asleep he gets up and worships God in the later part of the night.
>
> Explanation:
>
> The above mentioned three points prove that the loss of life is the best part of jihad.

Today, the stylization and ritualization of martyrdom is a key element in the Taliban belief system. Ex-Taliban clerics, now aligned with the Afghan government, who speak out against the practice are marked men, with the movement publicly calling for their deaths. Defection, like resistance, is an act imbued with rich meaning. A full account of ideology under such circumstances should seek to situate individuals' active interpretation and social theorizing within the social relations that war constitutes and the life-or-death

choices it ultimately poses.

Appendix

One problem with Eq. 2 is that it's it depends on the particular definition of valued brokerage I have employed in this paper. A more general approach, which does not rely on the concept of valued brokerage or bias, is to note that the number of different two-step paths between k and m is the k,m^{th} element of $\mathbf{C^2}$. However, this counts the number of brokered and non-brokered paths, so we must eliminate the latter. To do so, consider row k of $\mathbf{C^2}$:

$$\mathbf{c}_k^{(2)} = \begin{pmatrix} c_{k1} & c_{k2} & c_{k3} & \dots & c_{kk} & \dots \end{pmatrix} \tag{A1}$$

Each element in this vector corresponds to the number of two-step paths between k and l, but the corresponding element in the row vector $\mathbf{c_k}^{(1)}$ in the original co-affiliation adjacency matrix $\mathbf{C}$ represents whether or not there exists a one-step path between k and m.

With this in mind, let $\mathbf{x}$ be the vector such that

$$\mathbf{c}_k^{(1)} \bullet \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{0} \tag{A2}$$

In other words, $\mathbf{x}$ is orthogonal to $\mathbf{c_k}^{(1)}$. It can be shown that this vector is in the nullspace of $\mathbf{C}$, and that through Gaussian elimination one solution to A2 is the vector $\mathbf{x^t}$ with the property that every element will be zero precisely where $\mathbf{c_k}^{(1)}$ is one, and vice versa. This vector can then "pick out" those entries of $\mathbf{c_k}^{(2)}$. for which the path length is 2 and no less:

$$\mathbf{c}_k^{(2)} \bullet \mathbf{x}^t = \sum_n c_{kn}^{(2)} x_i^t$$

Removing the diagonal elements (which are irrelevant for our calculation), we have the exposure of *k*:

$$E_k = \frac{R_k - v_k}{\sum_n c_{kn}^{(2)} x_n^t - c_{kk}^{(2)}}$$

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Appendix

This note is to describe more fully how I collected the unique data contained in this study. I first set foot in Kabul in February 2008, as a fledgling journalist. I had no contacts in the country, and I had little by way of savings, so I rented a space in a "slop house," a large hall filled with migrant workers and day laborers (mostly from Pakistan), so named because meals consisted of the proprietor wheeling out a large bucket of some unidentifiable gruel. There were about thirty or so men in the hall, each of us sleeping on the floor. It cost one dollar a day. I could not speak the local languages (Farsi and Pashto) and no one there could speak a word of English. This presented obvious difficulties, but it was a blessing in disguise as it forced me to learn the local tongues rather quickly.

It was not long before I befriended an Afghan—let's call him Raqib—who worked at the local journalists "union," of which he was the sole member. Raqib had escaped the country during the Taliban rule, making his way to England as a refugee. In 2006, he returned to Kabul to visit his dying father—which cost him his refugee status in the U.K. Raqib had a motorcycle and a sense of adventure, and he was as eager to rediscover his country as I was to discover it. In March of 2008, we hit the road.

We traveled south to the city of Kandahar. Then, as now, the highway between Kabul and Kandahar was one of the most dangerous in the world—roadside bombs, firefights, and Taliban checkpoints. But ignorance is bliss, and armed with our naiveté and looks—with my complexion, and in a fist-length beard, I passed as a Kandahari—we managed to reach Kandahar city safely. Raqib then returned to Kabul, while I stayed in the city, renting a tiny room for three dollars a day in a ramshackle hotel. On my second day, I befriended another local journalist, whom I'll call Mustafa. Amid the dusty streets choked with auto-rickshaws and bearded men in ice cream swirl turbans, Mustafa cut a strikingly cosmopolitan figure: aviator sunglasses, a leather jacket, and a Yamaha motorcycle. We would spend Fridays in Babur Shah garden in north of Kandahar city, eating pomegranates while he played Hollywood clips on his phone. At some point during those weeks, he introduced me to his uncle, whom I'll call Hajji Kaka, an important elder from the Ishaqzai tribe. Hajji Kaka lived in Maiwand, west of Kandahar city, a vast desert and opium district that

was then (as now) a hotbed of insurgency. It would normally be off-limits to outsiders, but Hajji Kaka believed that with my complexion and his protection it would be possible for me to visit. At that point, I had been in Afghanistan for three months, and my Pashto had developed enough that I could generally understand what was being said around me, and I could answer basic questions. If I kept my mouth shut and did as I was told, he assured me, I would be safe.

And so I moved to Maiwand. I spent the next two months traveling through backroads in rural Kandahar, living in the houses of Hajji Kaka and his relatives. Hajji Kaka was one of the largest landowners in Band-i-Timor, a huge stretch of territory in Maiwand that U.S. and Afghan forces are fighting to control to this day. Some members of Hajji Kaka's family, like Mustafa, are Westernized, English-speaking Afghans working for foreign companies. Others are members of the Taliban, fighting the Americans. Like Hajji Kaka's, nearly every house I stayed in had relatives in the Taliban. Some nights, they would come for dinner, resting their Kalashnikovs in a pile as they hunched over a meal spread out along the veranda floor.

The friendships I made there opened a new world to me, of which I still have access to this day. When I left the countryside and returned to Kabul in the summer of 2008, I had witnessed a side of Afghanistan that no other foreigner had seen. Armed with a unique set of contacts, I was suddenly well-placed to report stories from deep in the war—stories that were inaccessible to the Kabul-based foreign press corps. I believe that editors soon recognized my unique access, and I began picking up regular work for the *Christian Science Monitor*.

These experiences gave my reporting a distinctive edge, and I soon got a job as a full-time Afghanistan correspondent for the Wall Street Journal. Meanwhile, I continued to collect oral histories and documents pertaining to the war. For example, I repeatedly visited Maiwand and Deh Rawud (the two districts studied extensively in this dissertation), living with elders for weeks at a time. I stayed with the same individuals whom I had befriended in 2008, and their protection allowed me unprecedented access to Maiwand and

other insurgent hotbeds. Almost all the data collected for this study originated in this period, between 2010 and 2012. I also meticulously collected Taliban newspapers, magazines, and other propaganda. I combined forces with two friends, and the result became the Taliban Sources Project, which we will soon make available publicly to benefit the research community.